BH201 .C37 1962
Carritt, E. F. (Edgar
Frederick), 1876-1964.
The theory of beauty.

S0-ELC-886

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-ELC-886

# THE THEORY OF BEAUTY

*By the same author*

THE THEORY OF MORALS (1920 Oxford)
PHILOSOPHIES OF BEAUTY (1931 Oxford)
WHAT IS BEAUTY? (1932 Oxford)
MORALS AND POLITICS (1935 Oxford)
ETHICAL AND POLITICAL THINKING (1947 Oxford)
A CALENDAR OF BRITISH TASTE (1948 Routledge)

# The Theory of Beauty

E. F. CARRITT

*Emeritus Fellow of University College, Oxford*
*Fellow of the British Academy*

*κουφονόων τε φῦλον ὀρνίθων ἀμφιβαλὼν ἄγει*

. . . . . .

*σπείραισι δικτυοκλώστοις*
*περιφραδὴς ἀνήρ.*

SOPHOCLES, *Ant.* 343.

(Men's subtlety imprisons careless songsters in its narrow net)

LONDON
METHUEN & CO LTD
36 ESSEX STREET STRAND WC2

DOMINICAN
San Rafael

701.17
C234t

*First published October 1st 1914 by Methuen & Co Ltd*
*Second edition 1923*
*Third edition, revised, 1923*
*Fourth edition 1931*
*Fifth edition, revised, 1949*
*Sixth edition, revised and reset, 1962*
*Printed and bound in Great Britain by*
*Richard Clay & Co Ltd, Bungay, Suffolk*
*Catalogue No. 2/3865/10*
*6.1*

73190

# Contents


I THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF AESTHETICS 1

II THE METHOD OF AESTHETICS—
- I Misconceptions of the Theory of Beauty 19
- II The Misleading Exclusion of Nature 24

III THE HEDONISTIC-MORAL THEORY: PLATO, TOLSTOY AND RUSKIN 31

IV THE REALISTIC-TYPICAL THEORY: PLATO, ARISTOTLE AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY 51

V INTELLECTUALIST THEORIES: KANT AND COLERIDGE 63

VI EMOTIONALIST THEORIES: SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE 82

VII INTELLECTUALIST THEORIES: HEGEL 102

VIII THE EXPRESSIONIST THEORY: CROCE 123
- I Expression 124
- II The Kinds 139
- III The Subject 143

IX THE SUBLIME 149

X FORMAL AND EXPRESSIVE BEAUTY 177

XI THE THEORIES OF *EINFÜHLUNG* 187

XII CONCLUSION—
- I Summary 192
- II Suggestions 196
- III Result 201

APPENDIX A The Ludicrous 207
APPENDIX B The Subject 236
INDEX 239

# Introductory Foreword

The earliest experiences I remember as purely aesthetic were some stanzas from Macaulay's *Horatius* (xxvii and following), Millais' bonfire of autumn leaves tended by young girls and an April carpet of yellow crocuses. My present favourites would be different but more purely aesthetic and perhaps less vivid. There is some analogy here with moral experience. I may have thought I ought always to do what Nurse told me, and, if I did so when it was disagreeable it was morally good though here it might be intellectually wrong. But about beauty I can only say that one familiar with history and languages, with books, statues, cathedrals, and music has a better chance of valuable aesthetic experience than the local dunce. But the wind blows where it lists, tastes differ with sex, age, colour, climate. The blind and deaf are handicapped; all are conditioned. Beauty is no quality of things but of experiences. It lives in seeming.

# THE THEORY OF BEAUTY

CHAPTER I

# The Subject-matter of Aesthetics

1. The impulse to theorize. 2. In what sense it can be satisfied. 3. Peculiarities of the task. 4. Common meaning of the term *beauty*. 5. It is distinct from *use*, *morality* and *truth*. 6. It is not necessarily joined or opposed to any of these. 7. It is distinct from *pleasantness*. 8. For many other things are pleasant e.g., eating. 9. Comparison of beauty to a dream. 10. The *Play theory*. 11. The sense of beauty universal. 12. *Beauty* not an ambiguous term, though beauties are different. 13. Is beauty a natural quality? 14. To deny this does not make it delusive, worthless or arbitrary. 15. Have all beauties equal value? 16. Their value depends not on the nature of the objects. 17. But on the purity and vividness of the activity.

1. Civilized man does not long remain content with the mere facts either of the natural world or of his own conscious life. On the one hand the natural sciences, and on the other the theories of conduct, religion and art, spring from a necessity to understand or theorize events and activities as well as to enjoy or pursue them. For though material advantage is sometimes the object of physical science, and has sometimes been a result of mathematics, both these are often disinterested, and metaphysics have never been suspected of any other character.

2. Man then has seldom been long contented to create or perceive beauty without attempting also to understand what he was doing; sometimes with a vague intention of thus furthering these activities themselves, but sometimes, also, from a purely theoretic impulse. The object of his investigation in this field plainly must be to understand what beauty is; to discover what the common quality or relation to ourselves may be in all those things which we call

beautiful. Nor need this be a search for that philosopher's stone by which minds of a certain cast are always seeking to transform duty into pleasure, beauty into moral instruction, everything into that which it is not. There is an explanation which is not explaining away;[1] or even if it be held that the aesthetic philosopher can only attain the negative result of destroying such false reductions of beauty, it must yet be admitted by all who undertake or countenance his task, that at the end of the process we shall know better what beauty is than at the beginning.

It would then be an absurdity to begin with a definition of beauty. To attain that is the object of our inquiry; and even in its proper place the definition would owe any value it possessed to the process by which it had been produced. Pater remarks[2] that the value of aesthetic philosophy 'has most often been in the suggestive and penetrating things said by the way. Such discussions help us very little to enjoy what has been well done in art or poetry.' But this may be taken less as a stricture upon the study than as a true suggestion of its nature. Philosophical reflection upon our activities proposes neither an improvement of them nor a final formula which will save us from exercising them. It proposes simply to think about those activities, and the process of thinking is the valuable result. Aesthetics are for aesthetics' sake.[3]

All that can be done at the outset is to indicate those kinds of experience which are to be considered in the attempt to understand beauty. We must avoid here the definitions of philosophers, still more of unphilosophical theorizers, if our inquiry is to be candid; while, if it is to be valuable, we must beware of any arbitrary and prejudiced circumscription of the field to be surveyed. Starting from an agreement on those kinds of things which most plain men would call beautiful, we endeavour to understand what this beauty

[1] Cf. Wallace, *Prolegomena to Hegel's Logic*, p. 341. 'But if they cannot be explained by being reduced to multiples of some one basis, they can be comprehended in the respective implication and explication they exhibit with their co-realities, . . . they can be identified.'

[2] *The Renaissance*, Preface.

[3] Cf. Chap. II. Burke hoped that 'One might come to discuss matters of taste with as much certainty as those which seem more immediately within the sphere of reason' (*On the Sublime and Beautiful*, Introduction).

is. We are investigating aesthetic experience, not the nature of things.

3. Our preliminary difficulty would seem to be greater than that of logic and less than that of the philosophy of religion. For on the one hand all men argue, and they differ comparatively little, upon consideration, in their estimate of an argument. On the other hand though no one can deny the existence of religion, it is possible to deny its right to exist, and to relegate its philosophy to some subsection of the philosophy of error. No one, probably, maintains that beauty is a mischievous illusion; but the extreme variety of men's aesthetic judgements is an obstacle to induction, and has caused some scepticism as to the possibility of aesthetics.

This is a difficulty shared by ethics; but in another respect the philosophies of beauty and religion seem at a peculiar disadvantage. Though ethics have suffered from the moral obtuseness of moralists and logic from the obtuseness of logicians, yet to write on morals or on logic is a kind of activity and a kind of thinking, so that some experience of the activity described must be present; but men may write on beauty or religion with little special experience of either. No one who can express himself is altogether without aesthetic faculties, yet these are not at all likely to be developed in proportion to the reflective abilities; so that artists and philosophers have alike produced mediocre theories of beauty, through failure either in their data or their analysis. Much remains to be attempted by the less dogmatic method of comparing, analyzing and bringing into harmony the theories of those who have been most sensitive to beauty or have exercised the finest intellects in reflection upon its nature.[1]

4. In calling things beautiful the plain man – the man, that is to say, who has no theory to support – certainly means something other than if he had called them useful, comfortable or good. There may indeed be cases on the border line, for instance, of the comfortable and the beautiful, like a restful colour; or of the beautiful and the good, like a heroic act. These correspond to an ambiguity

[1] Croce, *Breviario di Estetica*, pp. 15, 16.

in words like 'agreeable' and 'pleasant', which may be used both of scenery and of an easy-chair, and in words like 'noble' or 'heroic'. Apart from that and from slang or metaphor the essential meaning of the word is clear. What is distinctively beautiful need not by any means be distinctively useful, comfortable or morally good. It will certainly be in its own way pleasant, as will, in its way, whatever is useful, comfortable or good; but what is pleasant certainly need not be beautiful.

5. It is not necessary to labour the distinction between beauty and usefulness; one is valued for its own sake, the other – in itself perhaps disagreeable – is valued for its results. And it is equally obvious that the term 'truth' in its ordinary and scientific sense is applicable to the beauty neither of nature nor of fiction. Nor is the unsophisticated mind much more inclined to confuse beauty with goodness, in the narrow sense of moral goodness, than with what is useful or pleasant. Such superficial formulas as that beauty is the good apparent to sense, or perfection obscurely apprehended, have no doubt penetrated to the lowest stratum of intelligence and coloured the supposed candour of its confessions; just as in the last age did the complementary untruths then in vogue, as that beauty is the useful which is also pleasant. But neither of these identifications is supported either by the experience of the plain man – of each of us, that is, when he is unreflectively enjoying beauty – or by the test of criticism. Into natural beauty it is hard to say how the moral element could enter at all. Works of art cannot be approved by the good intentions of the artist, by the moral improvement they effect in us, or by the moral worth of the character delineated. Beauty makes its appeal to us for its own sake at least as immediately as knowledge or moral goodness, and whatever in the last analysis may be the connection of these three, they are so far independent that no amount of one would ever quite replace the loss of any other. Strictly speaking, perhaps, such a conflict cannot arise, for, as we shall see, the experience of beauty either is a kind of truth, namely, true expression of feeling, or, if truth be taken in the historical and philosophic sense, then beauty is incapable of either truth or falsehood but reigns in its own sublunary sphere inviolable. If the ex-

perience of beauty be a thing of worth, it is one of the things which it is moral to cultivate, one of the good things without which morality would lack employment; and, once more, if it be a form of truth, it is not only involved by but presupposed in morality, not only one of those things in whose seeking morality subsists, but actually the clear and adequate intuition of feelings which is a necessary condition of right conduct. But without here further discussing these alternatives it may be admitted that in a finite life, which must always be a life of compromise, there may arise a conflict between the pursuit of beauty and, say, the pursuit of truth, or any other object of moral effort. But this should be no more disconcerting to us than the admitted fact that no man can be learned in all the good kinds of learning.

6. It is often assumed that artists must be delightful and desirable people; often, with the natural antithesis, that they must be entirely selfish and unpleasant. The truth seems to be that from musical, pictorial or poetic imagination to good or bad conduct, manners and mathematics there is no inference possible. Great artistic impressibility shows great impressibility, that is to say great potentialities even in the practical sphere, but also a distracting interest. Popular and especially theatrical success encourages vanity, but it is as often enjoyed by bad as by good artists, and more often by rhetoricians than by poets.

7. It is more difficult, without advancing beyond the stage of ordinary uncritical thought, to distinguish beauty from those other qualities which are also pleasant and are sometimes called 'merely pleasant' or 'sensuously agreeable', of which 'comfortable' has been taken as a type. The attempt has often been made to rest the distinction on the sense organs employed; on the ground that aesthetic impressions come through the eye, ear and perhaps nose, only. But this differentiation is not only external and arbitrary, which at this stage of our thinking might be forgiven it, but sophisticated and disingenuous. It would admit as beautiful the pleasant sound of a humming bee, perhaps even of the church or dinner bell, if undisturbed by the desire to attend church or dinner, because these come to us through the ear like a symphony or a tragedy, but would

exclude the fresh feeling of the morning air, and a blind man's enjoyment of a statue or the spring.[1]

There is more truth in the common negative description that beauty is what pleases apart from desire. But this needs considerable qualification and explanation. Those to whom beauty means most do in fact desire it, though only for purposes of contemplation, just as they desire food though only for eating; and both appetites may, by starvation, become cravings. What is meant would probably be better expressed by saying that beauty is what pleases in the mere contemplation.[2] This would probably cover some things not usually or properly thought beautiful, and it certainly throws little light upon the nature of beauty; but as a rough description it might serve.

8. A more essential differentiation is sought in the statement, not I think contradicted by the unsophisticated mind, that judgements of taste claim to be valid for all men, while judgements on what is agreeable are purely subjective.

No doubt there is more genuine *de facto* agreement in the preference of strawberries to sloes than in that of Rembrandt to Sassoferrato; but on tastes merely physical there is no disputing, while about beauty we dispute enough. A man is rather to be congratulated upon his preference for common food, and is in no degree blamed either for eccentricity or for indifference; while his really vulgar taste in poetry and humour, or his complete insensibility to natural beauty, has a depressing and almost embittering effect upon us scarcely equalled by that of moral weakness, certainly greater than that of intellectual inferiority. That we naturally assume a right and wrong in taste, as in conduct and opinion, is shown by the pains we take to educate it in ourselves or others; and the development so effected is not mere habituation or change of which no account can be given. A man at one time of his life prefers sweets and at another savouries with no more to be said about it, but in

[1] Cf. Helen Keller, *The Story of my Life*, pp. 292, 352, 127. 35, And Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 156–66; *Samson Agonistes*, 7–11. This distinction was already refuted by Plato, *Hippias Major*.

[2] This is the definition of Thomas Aquinas: 'Id cujus ipsa apprehensio placet' (*Summa*, 1*a*, 2*ae*, quaest. 27, art. 1).

advancing from Moore to Shelley he, in a sense, understands the change; he knows in what way he is other than he was, and yet can replace himself at the old point of view and find in it certain elements of 'truth'. He may think some of his younger tastes were quite as pure as those of age and more vivid.

9. It is the quality of universal value, which in particular prevents the common consciousness from confounding beauty with a species of pleasant experience not necessarily connected with desire – 'artificial paradises' whether spontaneously imagined or produced by intoxication, opium and other more or less abnormal agencies. The most delightful dream may be nonsensical, or it may be in one way or another true. Nonsense cannot be beautiful, however hypnotic, however engrossing; and this not merely because beauty comes to us candidly as appearance without claims to historical reference, but rather because it does claim that its recognition is universally valued for humanity, that is to say is in a sense 'true', while in sleep 'each man goes apart into a world of his own'. A dream *may* be beautiful, we *may* experience both asleep and awake the beauty of a dream landscape; but when we fancy that our nonsense-verses are beautiful, as many people do in dreams, in intoxication or under anaesthetics, that does not make them so. We have not expressed ourselves but only dreamed that we did so, and the dream was merely pleasant. Asleep, as sometimes awake, we flatter ourselves; but in appreciation and above all in creation we aspire to the achievement of a spiritual reality, so that a thing of beauty is a joy, not while the fit lasts, but for ever in memory.

But since this language has been used by some who certainly do not think meanly of beauty,[1] we must suppose that by 'dream' they intend something other than what we take to be its vulgar meaning. If they mean to indicate the unaccountableness of beauty's apparition, its defiance of materializing analysis, its transporting insistence, in all this, beauty is at least more like a dream than it is like a piece of machinery or a prize poem. But they have not asked why 'dreamer' is a taunt of the philistines which obviously

[1] Cf. Stewart, *Myths of Plato*, Introduction and pp. 382 et seq.; and *Ideas of Plato*, part ii.

leaves the great artists unscathed. It is because their dream is the dream of humanity, too true perhaps to be readily received, but justifying its claim to immediate acceptance. Always by the event, and most often, when history does not fail us, by their lives, we know that the greatest artists were the sanest men of their generation. The spirit of creation may inspire as it lists, but we know by what kind of prayer and fasting, by what very human labour and self-denial, it came into Milton, Keats, Goethe and Wordsworth, Beethoven and Michelangelo. Dreaming in its ordinary sense is among the silliest things a man does, asleep or waking, and the most subjective; full of brute terrors and inexpressive desires.[1] Those who have experienced great beauty know that it is among the sanest and the most unselfish; that there is a sense in which it is 'true'.

The fact which such descriptions would emphasize appears to be this: that the experience of beauty is not a logical judgement nor a perception of fact. But no more can moral choice be identified with either of these; yet we do not describe it as a dream; while, on the other hand, we do dream that we carry on the most prosaic, intellectual and practical functions, such as counting and eating. Indeed we might say that beauty is more like a dream than any dream is, for dreams always lay claim to rationality and to historic truth and incur thereby the censures of irrationality and falsehood. Dreaming resembles bad science and bad conduct as often as it resembles art, and bad art as often as good. What Plato in the *Ion*[2] and the *Phaedrus*[3] rightly opposes is the notion that poetry is merely technical skill added to prosaic intelligence; that both what the poet has to say, and the way in which he says it, can be explained.[4] And there

[1] Certainly not 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'.

[2] Especially 533–4.

[3] 244–9, especially 245*b*. 'When any man without inspired madness knocks at the doors of poetry, thinking that by mere skill he is likely to become a poet, he is put to shame, together with the poetry of all such sober persons, by the poetry of those who are possessed.'

[4] Tolstoy, describing the successful intercourse of intimate lovers, says: 'As in a dream everything is uncertain, meaningless and contradictory except the feeling that directs the dream, so in this communion of ideas, apart from every law of reason, what is clear and consecutive is not what is said, but the feeling that prompts the words' (*War and Peace*, trans. Garnett, p. 1483). This is true of beauty, but many dreams fail in unity of feeling and many in clear expression; they remain turbid and ugly. I have

are times and places when this part of the truth needs emphasizing. When Dryden wants to emend *Εὐφυοῦς ἢ μανικοῦ* to *Εὐφυοῦς οὐ μανικοῦ*,[1] when Tickell praises Addison for his accomplishment of 'taming the natural wildness of wit and civilizing the fancy',[2] when Johnson tells us that 'All power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity',[3] we need to be reminded how Marlowe

> *Had in him those brave translunary things*
> *That the first poets had, his raptures were*
> *All ayre and fire, which made his verses cleere;*
> *For that fine madness still he did retaine*
> *Which rightly should possesse a poet's braine.*[4]

But another age with other failings will need the complementary, not incompatible lesson of the sanity of true genius, of that lucidity and concreteness of form which is called classical and which opposes to the incoherent listlessness or commotion of dreaming fancy the precise outlines of the waking imagination. For *l'écueil particulier du genre romantique, c'est le faux*;[5] and it is one calling, and among the highest, of the poets,

> *to exercise their skill*
> *Not in Utopia—subterranean fields—*
> *Or some secreted island, heaven knows where,*
> *But in the very world, which is the world*
> *Of all of us, the place where, in the end,*
> *We find our happiness or not at all.*[6]

---

clearly dreamed of seeing a beautiful picture which I was able to recall with equal pleasure when awake. But this picture was related to the rest of the dream not as a lyric to the drama, or an illuminated missal to the altarpiece in which it is set, but rather as the sudden absorption in a play or painting to the tiresome process by which gallery or theatre is reached.

[1] Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*; *Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy*; Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1455*a*. 33. 'A work of genius *or* madness' to 'A work of genius *not* madness'.

[2] *Life of Addison*.

[3] *Rasselas*.

[4] M. Drayton, *Epistle to Reynolds*.

[5] The rock on which romanticism splits is affectation.

[6] Wordsworth, *Prelude*, xi. 139.

The visions of Apollo are dearer than the dreams of Zeus.[1] Nothing is much more beautiful than some rare dreams, whether in natural sleep or under anaesthetics; but most are as ugly or as dull as the least expressive of our waking moments.

10. A similar misuse of language is our chief quarrel with the 'Play Theory' in its popular form. With this too we may agree that art is more like play than work, if by work we mean the disgusting and absent-minded drudgery for a livelihood or the ravenous pursuit of a meal. But, again, to play at art is even a more serious mistake than to 'profess' a game.[2] That he often did it is the deserved condemnation of Byron's vulgar frittering of his great genius. If all that is meant be this: that only when the life-sustaining functions are fulfilled have we leisure to elaborate our cricket, our art and our psychology, it may be granted. But the interest of the game called psychology will begin when it discovers why it is to the game called art that we attach such peculiar and earnest interest, agreeing to prefer it, unlike other games, to most activities of solid work.

Schiller, in calling aesthetic experience play, understands play in a very special sense,[3] defining it indeed as an impulse whose *only* object is beauty, and as the highest human activity. Little more is gained by such a use of the word 'play' than the distinction of beauty from truth and morality; a distinction desirable, but attainable with less violence to language. The further implications of Schiller's doctrine can be conveniently discussed in treating of Kant, from whom, as he claims, it is derived.

11. Beauty, then, is a quality approved by men in a way more or less analogous to their approval of pleasantness, truth and goodness; comparable to dreaming and to play, but more or less different from all these experiences. Its experience is not demonstrable but universally communicable. The question has been already suggested, how

[1] Cf. Περὶ ὕψους, ix. 14. This whole question will have to be reconsidered later.

[2] Athletics not practised for gain may be a form of art, perhaps the most flourishing form in contemporary England, akin both to sculpture and to drama. Unluckily a football match is less permanent than these.

[3] 'Certainly here we must not think of play as it goes on in actual life.' 'Man must only play with beauty, and he must play with beauty only.' 'Man only plays when he is, in the fullest sense of the word, Man; and he only is completely Man when he plays' (*Ueber die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen*, Briefe 14, 15).

far this quality does appeal universally to mankind. At first sight it might be thought the object of a much more rare and adventitious appetite than any of the others, for animals are aware of pleasure, and all sane men recognize truth and goodness. These seem necessary for our life. Complete ignorance of beauty may be thought possible for humanity, since a man is often accused and sometimes boasts of it. Yet such a view arises from an artificial limitation of the term. To be quite deaf to poetry is to be insensible, if not to language altogether, at least to all communication of feeling. To be quite blind to visible beauty is to care nothing for neatness, cleanness, grace, dignity or youth, except when these are convenient, hygienic or appetizing. Exactly what may seem to us the wilful ugliness of man's manufacture is the evidence of his universal and untrained search for beauty. He touches nothing from a bone dagger to a railway engine which he does not, in his own sense, adorn. Though many households lack food and fuel, few are quite without pictures, wallpapers, coloured earthenware, flowers, a singing bird or smart clothes.

Human life with no stimulus or consolation from some supposed beauty is almost inconceivable. Stripped of associations with a rather narrow preciosity the creed of Leopardi[1] is true also for the rude peasant and the material philistine. Beauty is no negligible or superfluous appendage to any man's life, but an aspect in which he must value his whole world. It is no luxury, but often an exacting and severe ideal. It is the salt without which life would be savourless.

[1] *Pregio non ha, non ha ragion la vita*
*Se non per lui, per lui ch' all' uomo è tutto;*
*Sola discolpa al fato*
*Che noi mortali in terra*
*Pose a tanto patir senz' altro frutto;*
*Solo per cui talvolta,*
*Non alla gente stolta, al cor non vile*
*La vita della morte è piu gentile.*

*Il Pensiero Dominante*, 80–87.

[Life has no worth or meaning save what is all for man. That alone redeems us from the fate that condemns us mortals upon earth to suffer so much with no other reward. But by that alone life may be more kind than death, not for the proud but for the generous heart.]

12. If 'beautiful' then be an epithet distinguished by ordinary thought from 'good', 'true' and 'pleasant', yet indicating a high value, it may still be asked whether it denotes a quality essentially the same, like morality, which is intelligibly identical in a brave and in a temperate act; or a mere circle of different qualities loosely called by a common name, as the term 'romantic' may be given to things like a jasmined cottage or Byron's poetry, which have no intellectual unity. This also is a question which must recur at a further stage, and can only be discussed here on a popular level. From that point of view the answer can scarcely be doubtful. Beauty, indeed, manifests itself not only in various natural forms, and in the so-called 'arts', but within each of these in an infinity of individual examples. It is true that the perfection of no one art could console us for the absence of the others; nor is there any canonical statue whose attainment would sum up sculpture and confine it to reproduction; nor one ideal lyric even of unrequited love or in iambic dimeters catalectic. When we say that the beauty of all beautiful things is one, it is not meant that if the unaesthetic elements of each were abstracted what was left in all would be undistinguishable; nor that they are all approximations to some ideal thing which alone is purely beautiful; it is not meant to deny that every beautiful thing is individual. What is meant is that the beauty ascribed to all beautiful things is no merely ambiguous name, but an identity which can in all its instances be recognized as distinct, for example, from such other identities as morality; just as red and blue both agree and differ in nothing except colour, so that exactly what distinguishes one from another is recognized as uniting them in contrast with instances of sound.

It is the other side of this truth which artists are fond of emphasizing; that the beauty of painting is not the beauty of poetry, that the beauty of Rembrandt is not the beauty of Titian, nor the beauty of 'The Entombment' that of 'The Presentation'; yet those who have practised more arts than one, in a greater degree even than those who have appreciated many, are aware that in every picture, in every art, and wherever it is found in nature, in a dance, in the sea, in tragedy, in a sunset and in music, beauty is unequivocally beauty.

13. There remains a question which, though hardly natural to the unreflective mind, is yet, at least in its usual form, rather popular than philosophical, and may therefore be considered appropriately here. Is beauty, to use the cant antithesis, objective or subjective? is it a property of things independently of us, like the weight of a sovereign, or rather, like the coin's value, a property lent them by the human mind?

Kant[1] assigns the latter nature to 'sublimity'; the former, in a qualified sense of his own, to beauty. The plain man does not ask this question, and, if compelled to answer it, would, I think, say that beauty is really a quality of things; but he would probably ascribe such reality also to colour, value, usefulness, pleasantness or strangeness, as well as to weight, though not really at all confusing the different ways in which these qualities are real.[2] Indeed, this problem is the first stage of sophistication upon the subject, induced by the divergencies of taste and a consequent sceptical interpretation of 'There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so'. And here we must not fear to seem on the side of scepticism against the plain man, for we shall be able to understand the motive of his error.[3] He thinks that if beauty is subjective its worth is diminished;

[1] *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, § 23. (Critique of Judgement.)

[2] Cf. Coleridge's *Letters*, p. 558, to J. Poole, 28 January, 1810 (edited by E. H. Coleridge):

'No two things, that are yet different, can be in closer harmony than the deductions of a profound philosophy and the dictates of plain common sense. Whatever tenets are obscure in the one, and requiring the greatest powers of abstraction to reconcile, are the same which are held in manifest contradiction by the common sense, and yet held and firmly believed without sacrificing A to —A or —A to A.'

[3] For the contrary point of view, cf. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, § 50, and Lotze, *Outlines of Aesthetic* (trans. Ladd), § 5. Sidgwick (*Methods of Ethics*, I. ix. 4) is the object of Mr Moore's criticism. He holds that beauty is only valuable as perceived because only as conducing to happiness or perfection.

Reid (*Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man*, viii) bases his argument for the independent existence of beauty, which is as good a one as I know, on the language of the plain man. But he finds himself constrained to admit–

(*a*) That novelty is similarly ascribed to things, though it can only be a relation of them to us.

(*b*) That if beauty belongs to things in themselves it is the same as moral or utilitarian perfection.

(*c*) That yet some beautiful things are not excellent of their kind, so that in their

it becomes arbitrary, and incapable of any kind of truth or falsehood. One way of answering, or at least of silencing this contention is by the well-worn arguments of a facile and shallow idealism. But such a weapon is not effective against all parties; and, in any case, the question recurs even within 'the world of ideas' so substituted for 'reality'. There is admittedly a sense in which weight is more 'objectively real' than colour or pleasantness: with which is beauty rather to be compared?

The absence of any science of beauty, the variety of our opinions about it, and its partial dependence on obviously secondary qualities are *prima facie* arguments for putting it on the subjective side. We must examine in turn the two main reasons for the plain man's opposition: that beauty would thus be degraded, and that all taste would be arbitrary.

14. It would surely be absurd to suggest that if sound and colour do not exist except when perceived they are therefore of less worth or importance than bulk and weight, that the inscription is greater than the spoken word, or that the blind man's world is best. The so-called primary and secondary qualities differ, since the latter are merely the effect of the former on our sensibility; but an effect upon our sensibility is as real as an effect upon anything else, and no less valuable. Colour would not be if there were no eyes, nor weight if there were equal attraction of matter. On this point it is at once seen that we are arguing no longer against the plain man but that man of straw whom philosophers so gladly substitute for him. The real sting of our theory, as the plain man feels it, is no merely metaphysical one; rather he thinks that if beauty be classed with colours, smells and tastes, it becomes really subjective, determined for each individual by his physical conditions, and robbed of that universal validity which, as against a mere *de facto* agreement, we joined him

---

case our satisfaction must be the result of some occult quality; i.e., we do not know what it is that we call beautiful, we only know its effects upon us.

(*d*) That often the excellence is a quality of some things and the beauty, which is a name for it, is attributed to others which express it.

Surely such conclusions are less to be ascribed to 'Common Sense' than to the supposed exigencies of a system.

Cf. F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 465.

in demanding. Here we have a genuine difficulty, not fully met by pointing out that even taste and smell may be educated to degrees of nicety which seem to be their own vindication. We are more helped by the analogy of language, and, to some extent, of morality. Language is language only if understood; the works of a dead writer in an unknown tongue have neither beauty nor meaning. Yet it cannot be supposed that language appeals only to the senses, nor maintained that it is a mere convention;[1] it justifies itself to the comprehension. And art – if not, as I think, nature also – is a language, in the sense that it is an expression. Morality again exists only for rational beings, yet what makes good and bad is not anything arbitrary, but a kind of thinking. So it is by practice and perfection of our aesthetic faculty, not refusing the example of those more gifted or more practised than ourselves, that we improve upon our first crude apprehensions of beauty.

15. There would then be nothing absurd in maintaining that beauty does not exist except when experienced, but that our experience of it may yet be true or false in as exact a sense as our perception of what is moral. But a difficulty for this position remains to be discussed. That a man should be in ecstasies before Canova[2] or Coventry Patmore[3] and cold to Pheidias or Milton is, perhaps, wrong; but if his ecstasies were real, was it not a better aesthetic experience than the listless preference of an impeccable taste for the grand style? Of Duke Carl of Rosenmold, Peter says: 'He put into his reception of the aesthetic achievements of Lowis the Fourteenth what young France had felt when Francis the First brought home the great Da Vinci and his works. It was but himself truly, after all,

[1] To argue this point shortly, it may be said that the description of language as a conventional symbol implies that words and sentences are first known and then by an act of choice assigned a meaning also already known but previously unconnected with them. The part of such a process in the growth of living speech is small. Cf. *Philosophical Remains of R. L. Nettleship*, i, p. 137: 'If language is "conventional" . . . this applies as much to the understanding between the self in one condition and the self in another as to the understanding between myself and another'; and p. 140, 'We say what *we* mean; every individual has in a sense to make his own language.'

[2] *Quarterly Review*, January 1816; *Report for Select Committee on Earl of Elgin's Sculptured Marbles.*

[3] Holman Hunt, *Preraphaelitism and the P.R.B.*, i, p. 159. List of great men by young Pre-Raphaelites.

that he had found so fresh and real among those artificial roses. . . . In art, as in all other things of the mind, again, much depends on the receiver.'[1] And every man must have asked himself if the sober appreciation of his maturity is, after all, worth the unconsidered enthusiasm of his youth for less mature embodiments of beauty.

16. We seem to run the risk of neglecting one element or the other necessary to the appreciation of beauty. By emphasizing the analogy of knowledge we might come to think of beauty as something simply to be recognized, however dispassionately, in the right place; by attending solely, on the other hand, to the amount of feeling involved we might be driven for our aesthetic ideal to the rather drunken man listening to a sentimental song in a music-hall. That this mere quantity of emotional excitement does not constitute beauty is clear. It takes two, a subject and an object, to make beauty, but the object and our reception of it cannot be thus considered apart and in abstraction.[2] For aesthetically the object is the thing as it is imagined by the subject,[3] as it expresses to him his emotions. We can allow that the enthusiasm of the young Coleridge for Bowles,[4] though inferior to that which he had for Shakespeare, may have been aesthetically higher than my own reading of Shakespeare, which may still be superior to my reading of Bowles. For the facts before us are not Bowles and Shakespeare, but Coleridge–Shakespeare, Coleridge–Bowles, myself–Shakespeare and myself–Bowles. And if we have faith in the unity as well as the diversity of human minds we shall still believe that, approaching a work of art from different sides, and individually aware of different aspects, we may progressively get rid of our prejudices and impediments to agreement. For there must be, not indeed one beautiful object or type of beauty adequate to all requirements, but in any given situation a pure and vivid aesthetic activity, whether spon-

[1] *Imaginary Portraits*, p. 150; cf. *Gaston de Latour*, ch. iii.

[2] Schopenhauer (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii, § 41, and Suppl. III, ch. xxx. [*The World as Will and Idea*]) shows that beauty depends not upon the physical thing but upon the way in which we regard it.

By 'object' here I, of course, do not mean necessarily a physical or 'real' thing.

[3] Cf. Bosanquet, 'On the Nature of Aesthetic Emotion,' *Mind*, vol. iii (N.S.), No. 10.

[4] *Biographia Literaria*, ch. i (edited by Shawcross).

taneous or stimulated by communication, to which the most artistic man most approximates.[1]

17. Some light, once more, may be thrown on this difficulty by the partial analogies of conduct and of science. The moral experience of the martyr for a bad cause may be higher than that of the conformer to a good one. It might be argued that the state of the Ptolemaist patiently evolving elaborations to cover every heavenly motion was scientifically better than that of the layman who acquiesces in the Copernican astronomy. But the best illustration is probably to be found in affection. Dearness or belovedness, like beauty, is a 'quality' conferred upon the object by a subject, and like beauty it might by complete genius be universally bestowed. But there is misplaced affection, as well as mere coldness, just as there is bad taste; and these consist not in the mistaken selection of objects really incapable of deserving any love or admiration[2] – for who shall say that such exist? – but in confounding with the pure aesthetic or affectionate activity a search, in the one case, for reciprocity or merit; in the other, for edification or enjoyment. That is to say, there is a better and a worse way of loving, though dearness is not a quality of objects, and though to love unworthily is more like loving than to argue well of love. So in the fleeting fashions of beauty there are Bottoms and Asses' Heads. But the fault lies less in Bottom, who is a good enough fellow, than in the Idleness of the Love; which yet in Titania may be worth the conjugal correctness of a mortal, or a complacency for Oberon himself.

## NOTE ADDED IN SECOND EDITION

It may be asked: What then is the function of the critic? He has many. He may be a lyric artist communicating his delight or disappointment in a work of art. (Cf. Appendix A.) He may be a philologist or antiquarian helping us to understand a poet's language or allusions and to replace ourselves at his point of view. But his

[1] For a further discussion of this difficulty, see Chap. V on Kant.

[2] Cf. the affection of Madame Pasquier for her son Ferdinand, by Duhamel in *Le Notaire du Havre*, Chap. XV, p. 176.

most essential task is purely historical, though it presupposes the aesthetic. It is to determine by interpretation of documents and tradition what reading of the artist is most correct; whether, that is to say, my aesthetic experience on reading Virgil or yours is most like Virgil's, and so probably best.

CHAPTER II

# The Method of Aesthetics

I. Misconceptions of the Theory of Beauty. 1. Prejudices against aesthetics: (1) that they are a substitute for beauty. 2. (2) That they are a substitute for genius. 3. (3) That they are a substitute for taste. 4. (4) That they attempt to rationalize the irrational. 5. (5) That they are loose physiology.
II. The Misleading Exclusion of Nature. 1. Is only art beautiful? 2. It needs appreciation as much as nature does; and appreciation *is* art. 3. Communicated art is a special case, which considered alone is misleading. 4. Consequences of the exclusive consideration of 'art' in aesthetics: (1) the realistic fallacy. 5. (2) The moralistic fallacy. 6. (3) The technique fallacy.

## I. MISCONCEPTIONS OF THE THEORY OF BEAUTY

1. It has been sometimes held that beauty is peculiarly recalcitrant to theory; that 'we do it wrong', indeed, 'being so majestical, to offer it the show of violence, for it is as the air'. The popular grounds for such a belief are obviously misunderstandings. Most simple of all is the supposition that the theory of beauty is, or claims to be, itself beautiful; that aesthetics would replace art and nature. With equal injustice have ethics been looked upon by foolish friends and enemies as a substitute for goodness, and philosophy of science for exact knowledge. The poet would be quite right if he should maintain that 'one impulse from the vernal wood', or one line of minor poetry,[1] will *show* us more of beauty than all the sages can. But even very ordinary thinking may be of more value for the understanding

[1] For

*All their worst miscarriages delight*
*And please more, than the best that pedants write.*

Butler, *Upon Critics*, ad fin.

of that impulse, provided it has first been experienced, than the greatest pure poetry.

2. More deserving of attention is another complaint of artists. Ceasing to fear or despise philosophy as a rival, they come to her as a dispenser of love-philtres, who, plain herself, will enable them to achieve beauty. But such hopes were by their nature certain of disappointment, for those who have a 'receipt to please' will be apt to use it:

*For all a rhetorician's rules*
*Teach nothing but to name his tools.*

Yet to be credited with such powers is consoling, and it is not the theorizers who have been least to blame for the superstition. They have often attempted to systematize genius 'with wretched rule and compass vile', and to prescribe even natural beauty; just as the moral philosopher, turned preacher or casuist, has endeavoured to make men good instead of making goodness intelligible. But this is to poison the wells of truth. We could only understand beauty by examining what men actually make or find beautiful, and to overrule their findings in deference to our theory is to tamper with the evidence: theorizing on such terms is easy. In truth philosophy creates nothing except philosophy; nor need she be ashamed at Bacon's stricture that *Tamquam virgo deo consecrata nihil parit*.[1] There may be little question whether beauty or its theory is the more indispensable to man; but, once again, the theoretic and aesthetic interests both exist in the world, co-exist sometimes in the same individual, and the possession of the greater does not quite console us for the absence of the less. We cannot love by the book, but we cannot live even by beauty alone.

3. The theory of beauty then offers us no guidance in production or appreciation; whether it be of practical use to the critic deserves question. Croce[2] maintains that this is so, and if, as it seems, he intends by *critica* the deduction of our appreciation from a true theory,

[1] *De Augm.*, iii. 5: 'The investigation of final causes, like a virgin dedicated to God, is barren.'

[2] *Problemi di Estetica*, p. 53, but contrast Schiller, Letter to Goethe, edited by Cotta, No. 834.

the theory is no doubt necessary. But good criticism has not always been this; and that it ever should be would appear, on Croce's showing, a pious aspiration. Plainly, good theory is serviceable as a prophylactic against bad, which is too likely to cloud the critic's candour; but, apart from this, it is doubtful if aesthetic system has ever contributed directly to great criticism; it has certainly produced some that is very bad. If Coleridge be brought forward as questionable evidence on one side, against him we can confidently call Lamb, accompanied, as a negative instance, by Rapin.

'There are,' says Dr Johnson,[1] 'three distinct kinds of judges upon all new authors or productions: the first are those who know no rules, but pronounce entirely from their natural taste and feelings; the second are those who know and judge by rules; and the third are those who know but are above the rules. These last are those you should wish to satisfy. Next to them rate the natural judges; but ever despise those opinions that are formed by rules.'

4. But exception may be taken to a theory of beauty on other grounds than these. It has been held that artistic creation and the perception of beauty, not being purely intellectual processes, cannot be by any intellectual process comprehended. This is the contention both of those who think beauty too high, and of those who think it too low a thing to be treated by philosophy; and it is the view suggested by Plato in the *Ion*,[2] characteristically leaving us uncertain how much irony must be read in his famous eulogy of the artists: 'What they do they do without principles of art, but by a sort of divine inspiration.'

To those who hold beauty a trifle, perhaps enough answer has been given. And no temptation has been disastrous to more philosophers than that of treating as negligible what they had banned as illusion; Plato himself has not always escaped it. But it is the illusions which require explaining.

Those on the other hand who think beauty too high and holy a thing to be rationally discussed no doubt intend by this its exaltation. But, apart from the dubious company into which their extravagant

[1] *Diary of Madame d'Arblay* (edited by A. Dobson), i, p. 183.
[2] 533–4. Cf. *Phaedrus*, 244–5, 249.

compliments bring it, we must remark that these mystics are still influenced by the confusion of thought just attributed to the jealous artist. They think that beauty must be subordinated to the understanding by being understood. But intellect and goodness are not subordinated to beauty when the artist creates a Paracelsus or a Galahad; there is no question of degradation or of grades at all. We have intellectual faculties and faculties aesthetic, none greater or less than another; we can set limits neither to philosophy nor to art, except the limit imposed by their natures – that neither shall do what the other only can.

A like plea against the competence of the intellect has been entered in the case of religion both by its enemies and defenders; and it might be extended to conduct and to the physical cosmos; neither of which is a process of the understanding or of the pure human reason. But to suppose that we can understand nothing but the understanding is unsupported by evidence, since the aesthetic writings of Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Croce exist; and is *a priori* as unplausible as to suggest that the eye sees nothing but itself.

This last illustration certainly must not be pressed, for the mind just differs from an organ like the eye in what Hegel[1] terms its 'infinite' capacity for self-criticism and self-comprehension. The analogy is only intended to point out that it is not *prima facie* impossible to understand mental operations other than that of knowing or understanding. Knowledge cannot indeed, any more than beauty or goodness, be 'explained' in the sense of being reduced to something, or a species of something, other than itself; for the instrument which thus explains is after all the very thing which is being explained away; but it may, as the last result of philosophical analysis, stand bare before intuition with a self-evidence incapable of further explanation.

The supposition that pure knowledge is the only proper object of philosophical knowing probably rests on the *hysteron-proteron* that in knowing anything the direct object of our knowledge is not the thing but the act by which we know it. The truth is that in knowing things we are aware of knowing, but what we know is the things.

[1] *Encykl.*, § 28.

Reflection on the nature of an act of knowledge is as much a new act, as much *re*-flection, and as distinct from the original act, as is reflection upon a moral or aesthetic judgement.

There is nothing in the nature of this last process, any more than of the first, which involves failure or even peculiar obscurity. If anything is inscrutable to our reason it would seem rather to be the behaviour of physical things; for this, however familiarized by the classification and nomenclature of science, remains for the most part something given, which, so far as we can see, might just as intelligibly have been otherwise, and therefore is not really understood at all.

5. But somewhat of this nature, it will be argued, belongs to the experience of beauty, so that even if we admit the possibility of logic, and more temerariously of ethics, we must leave aesthetics to the inductive generalization of the physiologists. The result of a sunset, say, or a symphony, would be only a complexity, with subtle mutual reinforcements, of agreeable nerve-stimulations by rare and varied waves of ether or of air,[1] whose effect on the organism is perhaps recondite but as definitely ascertainable and in the last resort as unintelligibly given as the effect of moisture upon iron. This view cannot, of course, be refuted by demonstration, but it is purely *a priori* and in no degree probable. There is no ground for supposing the eye of an eagle or the ear of a watch-dog less sensitive to delicate gradations of tone than our own, and equally none for thinking them as susceptible as ourselves to Monet or the Miltonic prosody.

For in any case language too makes use of physical organs and must stand or fall with other forms of art before a physiological explanation. But the most plausible explanation of a parrot's inability to converse is that he has really nothing to say, and a nightingale might at least be expected to enjoy Beethoven if it had the mind. The effect of sunlight is physically stimulating, but what we are concerned with is the emotional effect of this stimulus on the

[1] Acquaintance with these extremely interesting, though for us irrelevant, physiological conditions of beauty can be conveniently made by the layman in Grant Allen's *Physiological Aesthetics* and Herbert Spencer's *Psychology*, VIII. ix.

poet or the painter as it differs from that upon the dog. The blue sky means for them something; though nothing perhaps that can be expressed except by the blue sky; or rather perhaps it means an infinity of things expressible in an infinity of artistic ways, by Virgil, by Turner, by Keats and by Perugino.[1] 'The outward element of form, which renders the content accessible to intuition and imagination, exists simply for the purposes of our mind and spirit.'[2]

## II. THE MISLEADING EXCLUSION OF NATURE

1. We must no longer postpone a question which may already for some time have seemed to be calling for discussion. It would be strange if we could not call a scene beautiful till we had ascertained if it were virgin of the landscape-gardener's art.[3] I do not know if the gait of children is to be called art or nature, but I trace no difference of kind in my enjoyment as between the most artistic dancing and the paces of a fawn or even the curving of a wave: assimilations of a kind for which good authority is not wanting.[4]

[1] The emotional qualities of blues and greens must be partly due to their being the colours of sky and vegetation. The exciting nature of red may be partly due to its rarity in nature, partly to its suggestion of fire or blood.

[2] 'Das Aeusserliche der Gestalt, wodurch der Inhalt anschaubar und vorstellbar wird, hat den Zweck nur für unser Gemüth und Geist da zu sein' (Hegel, *Aesthetik* i, p. 91). See below, Chaps. X and XI. Physiology has, of course, moved since Grant Allen's day. But I know no recent English book on the physiological conditions of beauty which distinguishes, even so well as he does, scientific fact from psychological theory and metaphysical assumptions often unconscious, though highly disputable, and sometimes monstrous. Both he and Spencer assumed in common with their contemporaries that when we see a curve the movements of the eye themselves form a curve, and that this continuous movement is more natural to it and pleasant than a series of rectilinear jerks. It now seems to have been shown, by photographing the motions of the eye, that they are always a series of rectilinear jerks, even when we are looking at a curve. See Mitchell (*Structure and Growth of the Mind*, p. 502), who quotes Stratton, *Philosophische Studien*, xx, pp. 350, 352; *Experimental Psychology and Culture*, ch. xii. Cf. Bosanquet, 'Nature of Aesthetic Emotion', in *Mind*, April 1894.

[3] Kant even holds that some things would cease to please if they were found to be artificial (*K. d. U.*, § 42), e.g., flowers.

[4] Dante, *Paradiso*, x. 79:

> *come stelle vicine ai fermi poli,*
> *Donne mi parver, non da ballo sciolte,*
> *ma che s'arrestin tacite ascoltando,*
> *fin che le nuove note hanno ricolte;*

Yet the weight of authority in aesthetics is perhaps in favour of confining consideration to artistic beauty. That this should have been so in antiquity was to be expected, and the Middle Ages and Renaissance hardly ventured beyond the outlines traced by Aristotle, neglecting even for the most part the fine incidental appreciations of nature in the *Περὶ ὕψους*.[1] Addison, Burke and Kant, who like 'Longinus' were much occupied with sublimity, brought nature within the scope of their reflection, to be expressly or tacitly rejected again by Hegel and Croce.[2] The alternative does not seem to have its parallel in any other branch of philosophical inquiry: we cannot examine morality or reasoning except in the conscious proceedings of mankind; for neither exists elsewhere. Hegel argues that even if nature can properly be described as beautiful at all, yet art can be in a much higher degree, for there beauty is born again of the spirit and is free. He accordingly passes over the beauty of natural landscape with a single superficial page,[3] but has, not undeservedly, fallen under the irony of Croce[4] by his inconsistent investigation of the cause of ugliness in the turbot. Croce is right in maintaining that the arrangement of animal, vegetable and mineral species, abstracted from any context, in a

---

[Like stars revolving round fixed poles, ladies not leased from the dance but pausing till they catch the coming notes.]
And Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale*, IV. iii:

*when you do dance, I wish you*
*A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do*
*Nothing but that.*

And cf. Goethe, *Faust*, Pt. II. i. 3:

*Denn das Naturell der Frauen*
*Ist so nah mit Kunst verwandt.*

[A woman's nature is so kin to art.]

[1] Longinus, *On the Sublime*, Ch. XXXV.

[2] Hegel, *Aesthetik*, Einleitung (in Prof. B. Bosanquet's translation, ch. i); Croce, *Problemi di Estetica*, iii. To compare the Melian Venus with a lake (why not with a woman?), he says, is blasphemy, for natural objects are stupid things. But he goes on, 'they are so stupid that we lend them our sentiments'. And surely so we must to works of art. And this he recognizes in ch. iv, p. 499, and in *Estetica*, xii, xiii. *Contra*, Kant, *K. d. U.*, § 42; Addison, *Spectator*, Nos. 411 et seq.; Burke, *Sublime and Beautiful*, Part II.

[3] Ibid., vol. i, p. 167; but cf. Chap. VII, *infra*.

[4] Ibid., p. 161, and Croce, *Estetica*, p. 122.

hierarchy of beauty is absurd. Mountains are not, as the seventeenth century supposed, intrinsically horrid, a habitation for the wild goat; nor are they, as some moderns[1] have thought, exclusively stamped with the divine hallmark of beauty. They afford a beauty to which the seventeenth century[2] was mostly blind because they are the expression of something to which it was little sensitive. All these quarrels as to the rival beauties of wild and pastoral, town and country, are little better than the classical contention between the patriotic gentlemen of Derbyshire and Cumberland.[3] But it ought to be observed that this is nearly all true of art also. Dante[4] and Gothic architecture[5] found for the most part deaf ears and blind eyes in the age of the classicists.

2. The beauty of art goes on to a third nativity if it is appreciated. Just because natural beauty also in the moment of recognition is born of the spirit there is no absolute ugliness in turbots, though it may well be that for the average human mind and in ordinary contexts the sea-gull is a more expressive object. Or, more properly speaking, the human form is perhaps the most beautiful and the most disgusting physical object because it has the greatest potentialities of expression to be mastered; those of the turbot so far revealed to us are few, though some have been discovered by the Japanese. Artistic and natural beauty are thoroughly homogeneous. Every man is an artist not only in that he conveys his impressions to others by language, but because he perceives the beauty of the world and of art, each of which he must create or re-create for himself, since neither speaks to the animal.[6] The *work* of art is the communication.

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Part v, ch. xx, but *contra*, iv. xiii, § 20.

[2] Excepting always, among others, Thomas Burnet; see *Sacra Telluris Theoria* (*circa* 1680), i. ix.

[3] *London Magazine*, October 1778: 'respecting Dovedale and Keswick, each claiming the superiority of natural beauties. . . . I should compare Dovedale to the soft and delicate maiden and Keswick to the bold and sturdy Briton.'

[4] Rapin, *Reflections*, ii.

[5] Evelyn's *Diary*, 21 May, 1645; and Sir H. Wotton, *Elements of Architecture*.

[6] Cf. Thoreau, *Autumnal Tints*. 'And so it is with him that shoots at beauty; though he wait till the sky falls he will not bag any, if he does not already know its seasons and haunts, and the colour of its wing – if he has not dreamed of it so that he can anticipate it; then indeed he flushes it at every step, shoots double and on the wing, with both

3. It will probably be agreed even by those who, with the authorities just discussed, were prepared to oppose our method, that the man we call an artist and the ordinary admirer of nature differ only in degree. Both perceive or create for themselves beauty; the 'artist', owing mainly to a more vivid and absorbing perception, has the desire and the power to communicate what he has perceived, a power which reacts by way of stimulus upon his perception. 'The artist may be defined as a man intent to observe and to interpret his observation.'[1] It might still be argued that it were better to confine our attention to the more specialized and accomplished faculty; that there we should seize our subject in its quintessence. It may be readily granted that our most valuable argument will be the artist's view of nature, communicated to us only in his art, for this just is the beauty of nature as seen by the finest eyes and mind. But even if the artist were not commonly too busy for consistent reflection, he is generally an artist in one branch of art only, that is to say, a student of only one aspect of nature; and, to check the partial conclusions drawn from his limited data there, he must resort to his appreciations of other aspects of nature on which he has not specialized, and these are just the normal appreciations to which most theorizers about art are confined. And of such correction he will have special need, for the artist's reflections in a cold hour on his own art are apt to give disproportionate value to craftsmanship, the deliberate processes of producing certain effects.[2] He will admire in

---

barrels, even in cornfields. . . . The true sportsman can shoot you almost any of his game from his window; what else has he eyes and windows for? It comes and perches at last on the barrel of his gun.'

[1] Croce, *Logica*, p. 176; cf. Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. The poet is 'a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them; – whence, and from practice he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels'; and 'Among the qualities . . . principally conducing to form a poet is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree'; and *Essay Supplementary to Preface* (1815). Carlyle says somewhere that every man who reads a poem well is a poet. Every man who sees a mountain well is an artist. 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward.'

[2] I have certainly found some painters become more or less blinded to those aspects

others what he has vainly attempted, in himself what has cost him trouble, forgetting, to avail ourselves for once of the favourite eighteenth-century metaphor, that the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

But why, it will be asked, need he resort to his own normal appreciation of nature? Let him consider natural beauty, but only through the glass of art, as received and transmitted by the best faculties of others.

And our final answer will simply be that this would not content us. The extension of beauty at least is far wider than that of 'art'. The sun, the freshness of the morning, the surge and thunder of a storm, the laughter and movements of children, are things of which 'art' can only remind us. If we are put to the intolerable choice between 'natural' and 'artistic' beauty, weighing to the full the vast riches of music and poetry, I think our election must be for nature.[1] Evidently our theory must cover both. And if it be said that the nature of which we speak is nature transfigured by artistic perception,[2] we are brought back to the conviction from which we set out, that art and nature are in their beauty continuous, are really in essentials one and the same thing, since both need the appreciative activity. It may well be that a greater degree of this effort is generally necessary for the 'once-born' beauty of pure nature, so that, except in moments of energy and passion, quiet, middle-aged, reflective people are apt, like Coleridge,[3] to shrink from it, finding in themselves no answering passion, and turn with relief to the explicitness of art, or like Ruskin sometimes,[4] to the humanized nature which is akin to art. It may be that Coleridge could always bring enough to Shakespeare to find something there, though only

---

of scenery which are not readily adaptable to their own technique of communication. Actors are not the best judges of plays nor singers of music. The criticism of even great artists on unfamiliar forms of their own art is often singularly inept.

[1] Cf. Ruskin, *The Eagle's Nest*, § 41. 'The beginning of all my own right art work in life depended not on my love of art, but of mountains and sea.' Cf. *Two Paths*, i. Cf. Landor, 'Nature I loved and next to Nature Art.'

[2] 'Wenn Künstler von Natur sprechen subintelligiren sie immer die Idee ohne sich 's deutlich bewusst zu sein.' – Goethe. [When artists talk about Nature they always unconsciously presuppose the Idea of it.]

[3] Cf. p. 80.

[4] Cf. p. 38.

youthful passion could wed a sunset to him with the dower of a new heaven and earth; as Ruskin could always draw happiness from a Turner or a pastoral upland, though only in his days of vigorous enthusiasm from that mountain wildness which was the main inspiration of Byron. When our own passions are struggling for expression it is to the infinities of nature rather than the definiteness of art that we turn.

So far our argument has been that natural beauty is as legitimate a part of the subject of aesthetics as is artistic; it is always dangerous for the theorist to neglect such a characteristic section of his subject, and some special inconveniences of its omission may be suggested in our present business.

4. It will be necessary later to deal at some length with Plato's account of art. Here it is enough to say that the greatest, though the earliest, thinker who has discussed the subject made the almost incredible mistake of treating art as a mere reduplication of casual objects, and as therefore guilty, more often than not, of gratuitous badness.[1] There are many refutations of this doctrine. The easiest prevention of it would have been to recollect that the essential quality of art is beauty, in the wider sense of that term, and that beauty belongs also to nature, which is not the imitation of any particular object. Of natural beauty Plato tells a very different story:[2] it is the clearest image of ideal truth.

5. For a thousand years before the 'Romantic Revival' of the later eighteenth century, aesthetic theory, when it existed, was almost invariably distorted by the assumption that the essential thing in art was its moralizing purpose.[3] The splendid, though loosely worded, protest of Dryden[4] stands nearly isolated among the moralistic doctrines of others and of himself.[5] This also is an error which may be traversed from many directions. But had men

[1] *Republic*, x.

[2] *Phaedrus*, 250d; *Timaeus*, 47.

[3] E.g., Sidney, *Apology for Poetry*; Bossu, *Le Poème Epique*, iii; Dr Johnson, *Rambler*, 4; *Preface to Shakespeare*. Corneille compromises, *Discours du Poème Dramatique*.

[4] 'Delight is the chief, if not the only end of poesy. Instruction can be admitted but in the second place' (*Defence of an Essay on Dramatic Poetry*).

[5] *Dedication to Translation of Aeneis*; and cf. Bosanquet, *History of Aesthetic*; and Saintsbury, *History of Criticism*.

remembered that the beauty of poetry is essentially the same as the beauty of nature, it would have been harder for them, if not quite impossible, to explain it as the pleasant taste which hides the Aloes and Rhubarb of wholesome things.[1]

6. Lastly, on a more modern view the essential pleasure in art is the admiration for the artist's skill. This may form some small part even of genuine artistic enjoyment, though it readily degenerates into a vulgar stupor at the fingerless painter and the poet who can write with his toes, '*stans pede in uno*'; but it would need a bold consistency to maintain that our appreciation of nature is a conscious approval for the brush-work of the creator. Yet, on our showing, this would be inevitable if beauty really meant dexterity. '*Voyons, monsieur, le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire.*' Time has nothing to do with it.

These are a few of the more historically important cases where the neglect of natural beauty has meant the loss of a valuable check upon theories hastily applied to art.

The summary of our preliminary considerations is this: that everything is beautiful in whose imaginative contemplation – or creation – man expresses or makes sensible to himself the implicit content of that active spirit which is his or in which he shares. In the words of Sir Thomas Browne: 'There was never anything ugly or misshapen but the Chaos; wherein, notwithstanding, to speak strictly, there was no deformity, because no form. . . . In brief, all things are artificial; for Nature is the Art of God.' To support this by a collation of aesthetic theories will be the aim of the remaining chapters.

[1] Sidney, op. cit.

CHAPTER III

# The Hedonistic-moral Theory: Plato, Tolstoy and Ruskin

1. Permanent value of Plato's aesthetics. 2. He has two theories, which are inconsistent; (*a*) one treats *beauty* as an education. 3. But this is applied only to 'formal' beauty, artistic and natural. 4. Modern developments of this view. 5. (1) Influence of beauty on character. 6. (2) Influence of national greatness on art. 7. (3) Dependence of art on social justice. 8. Connection of beauty and morality. 9. (*b*) Plato's other doctrine is a condemnation of *art* as an imitation, pleasant but dangerous. 10. Does art aim at pleasure? – All beauty pleases. 11. But not all pleasant things are beautiful. 12. Nor is beauty proportionate to edification. 13. Modern developments of this second Platonic theory: (1) Tolstoy; (2) Ruskin. 14. Art for art's sake. 15. The purgation theory. 16. Its universal adoption or adaptation. 17. Its modern rationalizations. 18. An 'expressionist' interpretation of the doctrine. 19. Relation of art to morality. 20. And, in general, of beauty to character.

1. In endeavouring to extract from a discussion of some great aesthetic theories the largest common body of doctrine which we can accept, it will obviously be more useful to attempt a systematic than a chronological arrangement. But it is a lucky, though natural, accident, that the theory presupposed as a first stage in all thought upon the subject was also the earliest in time.

With the historical causes which rendered possible or necessary for a philosopher like Plato his strange philosophy of art, we are not at all concerned; and hardly more with its apparent affiliation to his metaphysic. For, as Plotinus showed, there was really nothing in that Idealism to involve the degradation of art below science

or common perception. 'The arts do not simply imitate the visible thing but go back to the principles of its nature.'[1] At least one of the reasons – and the one which holds our attention – for the elementary nature of Plato's theory is that he was the first to theorize on the subject. When we find the same view reproduced with far less profundity in later writers, it will be evidence either of *naïveté* in speculation, or of an amiable servility to the master.

2. The text for consideration will be almost entirely the tenth book of the *Republic*; for in the earlier books we are constantly reminded that he is legislating for the nursery or the schoolroom, is applying art to the politic formation of tender characters.

Indeed what we chiefly have to remark in this earlier treatment is a strain of thought found more explicitly in the *Phaedrus*, and systematized in Plotinus, which is the germ of most mystical thinking about beauty, especially from later mediaeval, or early renaissance, down to quite modern times. This is the doctrine, quite forgotten in the tenth book, that beauty, apart from any conscious allegory or definite moral, is by some secret affinity the nursing mother of truth and goodness; so that man ascends from rung to rung of visible perfection till he reaches the climax of beatific vision, and rests at peace with himself and with his neighbours because in a clear-eyed harmony with the universe. We may not like this comparison of beauty with a ladder, to be kicked down, it would seem, when the summits of philosophy have been scaled; we may see its dangerous tendency to the later utilitarianism; but it is a pleasant reprieve from the harsh sentence on the poets, to hear of a value, even secondary, in mere beauty 'like a breeze blowing from goodly places and from earliest childhood leading us quietly

[1] *Ennead*, v. viii. 1. Εἰ δέ τις τὰς τέχνας ἀτιμάζει ὅτι μιμούμεναι τὴν φύσιν ποιοῦσι πρῶτον μὲν φατέον καὶ τὰς φύσεις μιμεῖσθαι ἄλλα. ἔπειτα δεῖ εἰδέναι ὡς οὐχ ἁπλῶς τὸ ὁρώμενον μιμοῦνται, ἀλλ' ἀνατρέχουσιν ἐπὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐξ ὧν ἡ φύσις, εἶτα καὶ ὅτι πολλὰ παρ αὑτῶν ποιοῦσι καὶ προστιθέασι δέ, ὅτῳ τί ἐλλειπει, ὡς ἔχουσαι τὸ κάλλος. Cf. Plato himself, *Rep.*, 500*e*, 402*c*, and 473*a*.

[If the arts are despised for imitating nature we must first say nature imitates too. And further we must recognize that the arts do not only copy the visible world, but ascend to the principles on which nature is built up; and further, that many of their creations are original. For they make good the faults of things, as having the source of beauty in themselves.]

into likeness and fellowship and harmony with the beauty of reasonableness; . . . surely one so nurtured would, beyond others, welcome reason when it came to him and know it for his own. *Εὐλογία ἄρα καὶ εὐαρμοστία καὶ εὐσχημοσύνη καὶ εὐρυθμία εὐηθείᾳ ἀκολουθεῖ.*'[1] [Then good style and harmony and elegance and cadence all go with a good nature.]

Hegel thinks of art as a stepping stone to philosophy.

3. It seems likely that Plato was able to allow this virtue here to unmoralized beauty because he had not so definitely concentrated his attention as he later does on the beauty of art and indeed of the representative arts alone. Weaving, ceramics, architecture and perhaps dancing, seem to be contemplated; music – wrested, it is true, to an imitative interpretation – is emphasized as educational; the natural beauty of human and animal bodies is expressly mentioned; and there is nothing actually to exclude the beauties of inanimate nature, for which Wordsworth and Ruskin have made out so much stronger a case.[2] But in the condemnation of art in the tenth book nearly all the examples are from the really representative arts of painting and poetry; dancing and music, which, in spite of the mimetic conception of it in Greece, might have suggested some doubts, fall out of sight, beauty (*κάλλος*) [beauty] is narrowed into poetry and painting (*ποιητικὴ καὶ γραφικὴ*), and these by an easy transition become the *imitative* arts (*αἱ μιμητικαὶ τέχναι*).

Before passing on to consider the more famous and systematic winnowing of art in the later book, we are compelled to consider this educational approval of beauty in the earlier and in the *Phaedrus*,

[1] *Rep.*, 400; cf. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, x. All the words used for what Plato considers the edifying elements indicate what we should call formal beauty. This he finds both in the celestial movements (*Timaeus*, 47) and in human conduct. Cf. Wordsworth, 'Ode to Duty'. It is the making or finding of the form for mere disorganized matter, – no bad description of aesthetic experience. But Plato's curious blindness to the fact that this is the essence of all art is shown by his account of *all* poetry as narrative. 392*d*. Cf. *Philebus*, 51; see Chap. VI. So striking is the contrast of these two Platonic views that Volkmann (*Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, ii, § 133) actually uses it to argue a generic difference between art and beauty. Not only is this a strange paradox, but it is not the distinction Plato makes.

[2] *Rep.*, 401, 412.

by the powerful attraction which it has always had for a certain austere yet sensitive type of mind.

The thesis is that beauty, and in particular the visible beauty of form and grace and the audible beauty of rhythm and melody, especially if any of these be found in nature, dispose men towards right conduct,[1] and though this is more tentatively suggested, towards true thinking.

4. A variant of the doctrine, not exclusive but complementary of the first form, is that the creation and appreciation of beauty are *symptoms* of highly developed morality. This is the turn given to it by Kant[2] in holding that sensitiveness to the sublime and to natural beauty implies a strong susceptibility to moral ideas; and it is the more prominent side also of Ruskin's ethical treatment of art.[3]

Dante with all his instinctive poetic followers, Spenser,[4] Shelley,[5] Wordsworth,[6] and in a less self-conscious sense St Francis, form with the two great philosophers a dazzling cloud of witnesses. So we must not forget the solid, if somewhat stolid, body of common opinion upon the other side: that beauty is a snare, that purity is puritanical, that artists – and here Plato[7] is a lost leader – have often much to be forgiven them.

5. Taken in its most literal sense there is no empirical support for the dogma. The inhabitants of beautiful countries or cities are no better than other people, either morally or aesthetically.[8] Possibly

[1] Cf. Shakespeare, Sonnet 151:

*Love is too young to know what conscience is;*
*Yet who knows not, conscience is born of love?*

Aesthetic apprehension of the individual is an activity presupposed, not superseded, by morality and philosophy. It does not presuppose either of them, though what is aesthetically apprehended *may* easily contain both. It is this relation which puzzles Schiller (*Ueber Aesthetische Erziehung*), who never makes up his mind whether the aesthetic activity is a preparation for or a transcending of true morality.

[2] *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, §§ 29 and 59.

[3] *Modern Painters*, I. Sect. 2, ii, § 4; III. Sect. I, xv, §§ 9–12; IV. xvii, §§ 30–32; *Two Paths*, i.

[4] *Hymne of Heavenly Beautie.* [5] *Defence of Poetry.*

[6] *Prelude*, ii. 396–418; iii. 127–39; xii. 151–73; *Excursion*, iv. 1207–29.

[7] *Rep.*, 394–5.

[8] Cf. Ruskin's other view (*Lectures on Art* and *Modern Painters*, IV. xiii. 20) which might disarm even *Mr Whistler's Ten O'clock*. Cf. Coleridge, *Biog. Lit.*, xiv (II, p. 32):

Virgil's farmers would have been too good, as well as too happy, if they had realized their advantages.

6. A similar and very common thought is that certain conditions of society are specially favourable, if not necessary, for artistic activity. Thus, to take the theory first in its most general form, it is often said that the spirit of a nation must be profoundly stirred by political, military or scientific achievements, if great works of art are to appear. But the evidence for this connexion, if carefully considered, appears inconclusive, or at least shows little more than this: that when works of art arise in the world something else of interest is occurring or, at no long interval, has occurred or is about to occur. But since great art is rarer than interesting events, the converse proposition would be less convincing. It is true that Pheidias was a contemporary of Pericles, but if the Athenian supremacy was more exciting than the Spartan, it was its art that made it so. The times of Dante, of Michelangelo and of Velasquez would not strike us as superlatively interesting but for their art. The Reformation did not produce any mass of great art, say, in Scotland, nor the Revolution in France, nor the War of Independence and the subsequent remarkable activity in America. And though we have recently become aware of a delicate early Christian art, it is hardly more important than that of the pagan decadence, and would certainly not have suggested to us that a new heaven had appeared on earth.

No doubt if moving ideas are in the air, the artist, if he exist, will be apt to be moved by them, and to embody their expression in his works. Yet love, birth and death, suffering and nature, are with us always; they are enough to move man at any time and may be what move him most even when trade is flourishing or liberty expands.[1] And it is just as likely that art may influence practical efficiency as

'The ancient mountains, with all their terrors and all their glories, are pictures to the blind and music to the deaf.' Cf. *Anima Poetae*: 'When the country does not benefit it depraves. . . . Hence the violent vindictive passions of many country folk.'

[1] Schopenhauer (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Supplement III, ch. xxxi) remarks that the man of mere talent comes always at the right time, for he is spurred by the will and stimulated by demand, so that he goes hand in hand with the advancing culture of an age, hitting a mark which his contemporaries cannot. But the man of genius hits one they cannot see.

the converse.[1] Of course if a man's preoccupations lead him to identify art with the expression of a certain set of feelings, he will conclude that the prevalence of those feelings is a necessary condition of art. So great painting and architecture have been confined by the exclusively religious to some fancied 'Age of Faith', by the enthusiasts of Liberty to republics, and by lovers of established order to an Augustan Age. Yet even in their own sense this is a hazardous conclusion; for though most churches will perhaps be built when there are most worshippers, they may be built with ugly haste; pastorals have been chiefly written by citizens; and drought as well as plenty may stimulate the imagination of living waters.

7. A form of the doctrine, more plausible because unable to be tested, is that with happier and juster social conditions art will be born again; that when masons are well paid they will be sculptors; and that Leeds will have its Parthenon when the Aire is as pure as the Ilissus.

*And what wealth shall then be left us*
*When none shall gather gold*
*To buy his friend in the market*
*And pinch and pine the sold?*

*Nay, what save the lovely city,*
*And the little house on the hill,*
*And the wastes and the woodland beauty,*
*And the happy fields we till;*

*And the homes of ancient stories,*
*And tombs of the mighty dead;*
*And the wise men seeking out marvels,*
*And the poet's teeming head;*

*And the painter's hand of wonder,*
*And the marvellous fiddle bow,*
*And the banded choirs of music:*
*All those that do and know.*

[1] Cf. Plato, *Rep.*, 424*c*: οὐδαμοῦ γὰρ κινοῦνται μουσικῆς τρόποι ἄνευ πολιτικῶν νόμων τῶν μεγίστων. [When the modes of music change the state constitution changes with them.] The 'modes' of music were either Emotional or Contemplative, Romantic or Classical?

*For these shall be ours and all men's,*
*Nor shall any lack a share*
*Of the toil and the gain of living*
*In the days when the world grows fair.*[1]

The beautiful artistic expression of these hopes by Ruskin and William Morris sometimes blinds us to the fact that at least these works of theirs, these touching and stirring aspirations towards some sweet city of Demos, have come to birth in our own day and because of our own surroundings. I have a better faith of the human spirit, and not without witness, than to suppose that either material discomforts or unjust conditions could ever preclude it from the artistic activity. I could as soon think with Hegel that the age of art is past; or that good actions would vanish from the earth because they are so seldom successful; which yet, 'by some heavenly chance',[2] as Plato wonderingly reminds us, spring still from the least congenial soil. Such beliefs came partly from an idealization of the Middle Ages and partly from the Utopian fancy that the reform of one crying evil will inaugurate the kingdom of heaven. But as the mediaeval guilds with their peculiar freedoms and oppressions permitted our great cathedrals, so did the slave labour of Athens, with its own callousness and glory, produce the Acropolis, and that of Egypt the Pyramids. As the Venetian plutocracy had its painters so may the golden age have its poets, who may be less or greater than those who fleeted their time less carelessly.

This much can be said: that the art most congenial to Morris may perhaps demand for its flourishing that just and happy society for which he worked. For in spite of his tender sentiment and his Gothic romance, the beauty that he loved was classical or decorative, not dramatic or sublime; – the beauty of physically perfect human beings, *donne leggiadre* and good men of their hands, happy among the gardens they have planted and the children they have begotten; not the tragic beauty of that poverty and strife and sin from which the world so painfully frees itself. And for a temperament

[1] W. Morris, *Poems by the Way* – 'The Day is Coming'.

[2] *Rep.*, 366*c*; *Meno*, 99*e*. In the *Ion*, 536*c*, the same expression is used of the artist's inspiration.

of this kind the stimulating setting is perhaps not the smoke loved by Whistler and Monet, nor the poignant contrasts of industrialism, though even there 'cheerfulness will be always breaking in'. For it, 'The desire of the heart is also the light of the eyes. No scene is continually and untiringly loved but one rich by joyful human labour; smooth in field; fair in garden; full in orchard; trim, sweet and frequent in homestead; ringing with voices of vivid existence'.[1] Perhaps no reforms will universally realize this picture; in any case we shall never have to lament the loss of tragic matter; yet perhaps there is always matter also for the artist of favour and prettiness, 'the idle singer' – as none had the right to call Morris save himself – 'of an empty day'. If the play of the palaestra gave us the athlete statues, the hard toil of the stonecutters' yard[2] gave us the Aeginetan pediments and that of the French peasant the beauty of Meunier and of Millet. The world will not '*grow* fair'. And only the artist can make it so. But he always can.[3]

8. And in some such hypothesis as this concerning the relation of beauty to goodness, we must rest: the mind is one, and keen aesthetic sensibilities, cultivated by practice, imply, other things being equal, the power of unselfish sympathy and a nice discrimination of concrete facts. An artist in the best sense ἥττων τῶν καλῶν [in love with beauty] is not likely to be merely violent or covetous or cruel, nor to satisfy himself with conventional principles and the letter of the law; we should expect of him tact, tolerance and mercy, and a sensibility to the actual situation.[4] No doubt these qualities will bring their own defects, but the root of all evil is philistinism as Plato describes it: 'to believe in nothing but those material things which can be seen and handled, eaten, drunken and lusted after.'[5] And of such a character he describes the genesis, how 'it grows slack and blind and dull since it is not aroused or strengthened,

[1] Ruskin, *Unto This Last.*

[2] Hegel, *Aesthetik*, vol. ii, p. 459.

[3] Cf. *Mr Whistler's Ten O'clock.*

[4] Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, § 29, *Allgemeine Anmerkung:* 'The beautiful prepares us to love something, and indeed Nature, disinterestedly; the sublime to value it highly even against our natural interests.'

[5] Μηδὲν ἄλλο δοκεῖν εἶναι ἀληθὲς ἀλλ' ἢ τὸ σωματοειδές οὗ τις ἂν ἅψαιτο καὶ ἴδοι καὶ πίοι καὶ φάγοι καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἀφροδίσια χρήσαιτο. *Phaedo*, 81 B.

nor its sensibility clarified by any tincture of art or letters or philosophy'.[1]

Coleridge has in his own way summarized the matter well: 'Nature has her proper interest, and he will know what it is who believes and feels that everything has a life of its own and that we are all One Life.'[2] And, less metaphysically, Shelley:[3] 'A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. . . . Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same way as exercise strengthens a limb. A poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither. By this assumption of the inferior office of interpreting the effect, in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign a glory in a participation in the cause.'

9. The discussion of Plato's theory of art as developed in the tenth book of the *Republic* is a question logically previous to that of any other because he is constructing less an aesthetic than an anti-aesthetic. He and those who, consciously or not, derive from him, do not so much tell us what art is as that it is nothing, or next to nothing. For since it is the copy of particular objects, which are themselves only copies of the intelligible universals or Ideas, it is an illusion three times removed from reality; a level which the *Republic* seems to indicate as the very backward and abysm of being.[4] Art is

[1] Οὔτε λόγου μετίσχον, οὔτε τῆς ἄλλης μουσικῆς, ἀσθενές τε καὶ κωφὸν καὶ τυφλὸν γίγνεται, ἅτε οὐκ ἐγειρόμενον οὐδὲ τρεφόμενον οὐδὲ διακαθαιρομένων τῶν αἰσθήσεων. *Republic*, 411. (The διακάθαρσις αἰσθήσεων here spoken of is clearly not a removing but a purification.)

[2] To Sotheby, September 1802. *Letters*, i, 403.

[3] *The Defence of Poetry*.

[4] In the quite different classification of the *Philebus* (66) the beautiful, not here regarded as imitative (cf. 51*b*), is given the second place in the classification of goods along with the symmetrical and perfect, below measure and harmony, but above mind, wisdom, science, art, true opinion, and painless pleasure.

of course admitted to be pleasant, that is indeed what makes its dangerous importance; but like other pleasant things, wine or dice-playing, it must never be allowed to interfere with our social duties, can hardly be justified indeed as a relaxation, unless for the sake of the health. The reason of our pleasure appears to be that art imitates things; things which themselves would please us to possess, to do or to witness, though the reality might often be immoral or attended with inconvenience and, in one way or another, cost too much. Art then will have just the qualities of the things it imitates, and must be regulated by the legislator just as those things themselves; for though it might seem that the copy would be at least weaker than the original, it is as a matter of fact, owing either to the venal exaggeration of the artist, or to some psychological connection of make-believe with emotion,[1] more exciting. The natural consequence would be that imitation of what is good should be allowed, and of what is bad forbidden; but no one except the philosopher is able to recognize the truly good and bad, and he will teach rather by example, by the reality of virtue, unless to the very young, than by colours or feigning words which touch but its appearance.[2] Even the imitation of indifferent things, if such there be, must be forbidden, for imitating many things, like dilatory and inconstant conduct, weakens character.

Now two main strands are interwoven in this theory, the hedonistic-moral and the mimetic, which are not inseparable.[3] For even if we thought the method of art something quite different from mere copying, we might still hold that, as art, it aimed merely at pleasure, and therefore could not be called good or bad, but only pleasant, except as it promoted good or bad conduct. And conversely we might hold art to be some sort of imitation, but believe, with Aristotle,[4] that this was either a means to knowledge or a valuable activity in itself. But I think Plato takes neither of these last views;

[1] *Rep.*, 604, 606. Schopenhauer (*The World as Will and Idea*, iii, § 51) gives a truer reason for this 'inciting' element in art.

[2] Cf. Epicurus' opinion that the wise man would 'live poems' rather than write them. Diog. Laert., x. 121.

[3] But cf. Bosanquet, *History of Aesthetic*, chs. iii, iv.

[4] *Poetics*, 1448*b*.

he does not even seem to hold that imitation is *pleasing* in itself, but only when it imitates pleasant things.[1] It will be convenient therefore to postpone our discussion of artistic realism to the criticism of what we have called anti-aesthetic, of the doctrine, namely, that art only has its value in the pleasure or the goodness it promotes. For that art simply pleases, and that it simply instructs, are two complementary untruths, inconsistent, but not seldom held together.

10. The saying of Dryden has been quoted with approval[2] that the end of poetry is to please; and compared with the didactics of a Bossu this seemed a truth. For at least poetry and art always do please, in the loose sense of that term which has given plausibility to hedonism; to the man whom they do not please they are not beautiful. An exhortation to hear poetry or music whether it pleases us or no is even more obviously a false abstraction than Aristotle's saying that we should choose virtue if it gave us *no* pleasure.[3] We can form no conception of a virtuous act without its proper satisfaction, and what a man hears without pleasure is to him noise. We may listen to the musician's noise, as we do to that of a foreign language, in the hope of one day catching its delightful meaning, but till it please us we are not listening to music.

Yet it does not follow that art, any more than morality, is just a way of indiscriminately seeking pleasure. If it were so, since many pleasures are admittedly bad, either in themselves, like the pleasures of malice, or in their results, like the pleasure of intoxication, Plato's attack would be justifiable. He would be both a bad and a foolish man who should refuse to submit his culinary pleasures to a medical censorship. If all we can say about art in itself is, as Plato supposed, that it tickles the senses, then we are driven like him to find some incidental utility in it to account for the high value we place upon it as compared with even keener titillations.

11. The conclusive arguments against setting up abstract pleasure as the end of conduct are well known.[4] With the necessary modifications they are applicable to hedonistic theories of beauty. It will be

[1] *Rep.*, 599*a*. [2] P. 29. [3] *Eth. Nic.*, 1174*a*, 12.

[4] They are accessible in numberless treatises from Plato's own *Philebus* (especially 55) to Mr F. H. Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, iii, Mr Moore's *Principia Ethica*, ch. iii, or Dr Rashdall's *The Theory of Good and Evil*, ch. ii.

enough for us to say here with Aristotle that art aims not at pleasure, but at its proper pleasure;[1] or more accurately that the creation and perception of beauty are activities recognized as good and desirable in themselves for mankind, as much as virtue or knowledge; and therefore as much as these bringing with them their appropriate satisfaction, and as little in need of extraneous justification.[2] If art were in itself nothing but a means to pleasure we should be content to exchange it for a greater quantity of other means to the same end; and it would be purely selfish to further what pleases a few rather than what pleases many; so that a certain quantity of tobacco or conjuring would be equal to Shakespeare. To deny this on the ground that we want the peculiar kind of pleasure called art is to concede the point. For if we prefer aesthetic pleasure to a greater or equal quantity of gustatory enjoyment it is not pleasure generically that attracts us but the differentia.[3]

12. Similarly if art were only valued because it promoted morality we should only employ it when assured that it was cheaper and more efficient than sermons; while to prefer *Don Quixote* to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* would be mere voluptuousness. Both these suppositions are palpably trivial. Beauty is not to be thus bought or sold for a price.

Though, as has been said, the moralistic theory, occasionally in overt company of its hedonistic accomplice or patron, was orthodox until the revival of philosophy in the eighteenth century, it was, like many undisputed orthodoxies, undefended by arguments. To find these we must turn to the quite modern and unsystematic writings of Ruskin and Tolstoy.

13. Tolstoy's incoherence makes his theory[4] difficult to criticize, but its popularity gives it a certain importance, and its derivation, through many degrees, from Plato renders it instructive. Quite neglecting the aesthetic qualities of nature he explicitly condemns the conception of beauty as something noxiously hedonistic;[5] art is

[1] *Poetics*, 1453*b*, 11. [2] Croce, *Estetica*, p. 87.

[3] If it be denied, with truth as I think, that different pleasures can ever be summed or measured quantitatively, my contention would be true *a fortiori*, but it seemed unnecessary to raise this question. For the opposing arguments, cf. Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil*, II. i, and Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, pp. 229–30.

[4] English translation, *What is Art?* [5] Pp. 52, 59.

the deliberate communication of feelings,[1] a thing in itself indifferent, but permissible and indeed praiseworthy when those feelings are compatible with the good and end of life as conceived at the time.[2] The resemblance to Plato here in results, as well as in moral enthusiasm, though not in antecedent thought or in the immensity of philosophic background which makes Plato's casual mistakes so invaluable, is sufficiently striking; and it is further increased by the demand for simplicity, a demand which Tolstoy, entangled in the *State of Nature* fallacy, rationalizes on the ground that all art should be intelligible to the simplest peasant.[3] He does not bring these two tests into relation by telling us if his simple peasants are really contented with an art that communicates religious feelings, while it excludes dogma, the love of the sexes or of one's own family or property, pride and patriotism.[4] Again, though he has turned a blind eye to natural beauty he cannot quite blink the fact of formal or decorative art, and finds it very troublesome for his theory. A good arabesque is said to communicate 'the feeling of admiration for a beautiful shape',[5] but he should properly add 'or of disgust for an ugly one', since in beauty he finds nothing akin to art but only sensual pleasure. On the antithesis of form and matter he is perhaps not more confused than better thinkers. It would, however, be trivial to dwell on these and similar confusions. We are only concerned to draw from partial theories what stuff we can for sounder doctrine. And although he has confused communication with expression, Tolstoy is right in his main teaching – that all the elaborate 'art-forms' of tradition or caprice, unless they have behind them some vital passion forcing itself into just this and no other mould, are nothing but the pedantic luxury which is a weariness of the flesh. Ruskin[6] holds that fine art has only three functions: expressing the religious sentiments of men, perfecting their ethical state, and doing them material service; and though he wisely modifies, and even contradicts this,[7] it is on the whole his main view.

[1] P. 50. [2] Pp. 54, 156. [3] P. 145.
[4] Ch. xix. [5] Pp. 49, 171. [6] *Oxford Lectures.*

[7] Ibid. and *Two Paths*, § 66. Ruskin defends his inconsistency on this and other points admirably and with an almost Hegelian turn, consistently inconsistent with his views of German philosophy. *Cambridge Inaugural*, § 13; *Modern Painters*, viii. 1, § 14.

Of all these anti-aesthetics, which reduce the value of that pleasant thing called beauty to the moral lesson imparted by an artist, we must barely say that they do not describe our aesthetic experience. That the paintings of Velasquez do more for honesty or temperance than those of Carlo Dolci or Benjamin West is simply a pious dogma for which, after sympathetic effort, I can see no argument.

14. It is not impossible, but it is rare, to find a quite satisfactory work of art to which we can assign its edification. Milton does not really justify God's ways to men, but we perhaps care more for him than those who thought he did. Dr Johnson saw that Shakespeare 'seems to write without any moral purpose' and 'is not always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked'.[1] As Scott said: 'The professed moral of a piece is like the mendicant who cripples after some splendid and gay procession, and in vain solicits the attention of those who have been gazing on it.' Plato has only the logic of his premises when he banishes painters and poets. If it be said that this is very unimaginative and pedantic criticism; that though Velasquez has no moral we are the better for Las Meniñas, as Lamb perpended whether he might be for the Restoration drama;[2] and that Comus improves us though not by its preaching; we must reply that, in a sense, this may be so, but most certainly not in the sense which Tolstoy, Ruskin, and, with a difference, Plato, in the true, usual and literal meaning of their words, intend. For after all the word which Lamb preferred to describe his amelioration by Congreve was 'gayer'; and his discrimination was as nice here as ever, for it is a most insidious anti-aesthetic formula that comedy by lashing vice excuses laughter. Many men have lashed vice without drawing a smile, and out of very good virtues has come good comedy.[3]

If the improvement which justifies art is aesthetic improvement, if the lesson of Velasquez is to see unsuspected beauties, we are in a

[1] *Preface to Shakespeare.*

[2] *Essays of Elia*, 'On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century'.

[3] Cf. Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 29: 'The true use of Comedy is in laughter itself, in the practice of our power to discern the ridiculous.' Similarly, it is not the worst poetry nor that we like least which we can best parody. Cf. Keats' and Swinburne's parodies of their own.

circle; for seeing beauty in general wants as much moral justification as seeing it in Velasquez. If we are better men for being susceptible to the beauty of light and the charm of mere seeing, we were better already in contemplating the picture. Every aesthetic act is its own reward, instantaneously perfect; for though it may be said only to find its complete end in the formed habit, this on the other hand, apart from its particular exercises, is a mere potentiality.

15. But the moral effect of art has been maintained in a more disputable form which founds itself with varying directness on the famous sayings of Aristotle[1] that tragedy, by exciting pity and fear, effects its purgation of such emotions, and that certain kinds of music do the same for 'enthusiasm'. Fortunately we are not involved in the philological discussion of this much-debated passage. We may accept Professor Bywater's conclusion that Aristotle thought that tragedy benefits us by giving a harmless vent to feelings with which we shall then be less heavily weighted in our active life.[2] We need only remark that in that case Aristotle seems to have been careless. Whatever may be thought of 'enthusiasm' and fear, pity is not, except in a very special sense, a faculty of which the statesman should wish to purge us. Nor are pity and fear deposits of which the more we spend the less we have, but rather, as Plato[3] knew, faculties which are strengthened by exercise; we should not fortify a man against a night-watch with a dismal treatise, nor steel him against pity with a tale of tears. Nor does Aristotle seem prepared to advise us, as he consistently might, to sow in the harmless field of the theatre a yet wilder kind of oats.

16. What really concerns us is that almost every writer on tragedy from the revival of Aristotelian learning to our own day has adopted something which he took to be the doctrine of the *Poetics*. In the most general terms they may be said to have agreed that after the excitement of the emotions by a tragedy these are left

[1] *Poetics*, 1449*b*, 27; *Politics*, 1341*b*, 32.

[2] *Aristotle on the Art of Poetry*, p. 161. By taking the genitive objectively he presents the purgation as a complete removal or at least a merely quantitative reduction, not the sifting out of any undesirable element.

[3] *Rep.*, 411, 606.

in a better condition than they were before.[1] And it has naturally been suggested that, if this is so, something analogous may be expected from other arts for the feelings which they exercise. Thus have the determined moralists, who are three-fourths of the world, found a way to justify art without demanding a moral. How far this consensus is of genuine experience and how far of reverence for the authority may be impossible to determine. There are strong arguments on the other side; Mr Bradley[2] says: 'If poetic value lies in the mitigation of the passions, the Odes of Sappho will win but little praise.' But I am not sure that I agree, and if some more general word were put for 'mitigation' so as to cover the vague notions of appeasement, correction, and refining attributed, however loosely, to Aristotle, I think that I should not. Passion thus realized, thus expressed and irradiated by the spirit is a more human thing than when it was brutally indulged or brutally stifled, though possibly a still humaner poem might be, or has been, written to irradiate a different motive. To read or write Odes is not life.

17. No doubt a cathartic effect is more obvious in tragedy than elsewhere; in Greek tragedy, as Shelley says:[3] 'Error is divested of its wilfulness; men can no longer cherish it as the creation of their choice. In a drama of the highest order there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect.' R. L. Nettleship's criticism upon *Antony and Cleopatra*,[4] that 'as soon as there is any beauty, or tragedy, or humour in the thing it ceases to be mere "vice",' might be transferred to Sappho, for the contemplative objectification explicit in tragedy is implied also in lyric. 'Archilochus,' says Nietzsche,[5] 'as the man burnt up with passions of love and hate, is only a vision of the genius who is now no longer Archilochus but the genius of the world, who

[1] Bywater (op. cit., Appendix) and Butcher (*Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, ch. vi) give many of these interpretations and resemblances. To which may be added Burke, *On the Sublime and Beautiful*, iv, §§ 6, 7; Shelley, *Defence of Poetry*; Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, §§ 7, 16, 21, pp. 55, 116, 150.

[2] *Oxford Lectures, Poetry for Poetry's Sake*. A. C. Bradley.

[3] *Defence of Poetry*.

[4] *Philosophical Remains*, i, 'Miscellaneous Papers', No. 29.

[5] *The Birth of Tragedy*, § 5, p. 42.

symbolically expresses his eternal pain in that similitude of the human Archilochus.'

Schopenhauer has extended most widely over the field of art this theory of enfranchisement from the passions.[1] 'The head of the God of the Muses with eyes fixed on the far distance stands so freely on his shoulders that it seems wholly delivered from the body and no more subject to its cares.' But it is Hegel[2] who has most profoundly illuminated it. After pointing out certain difficulties in the view that art aims at simply arousing the greatest amount of emotion of any kind, he considers the theory that in some way it mitigates the passions – *emollit mores* – and asks how it could do this. The brutality of passion consists in its selfishness and engrossingness, in the identification of the self with a narrowly limited interest. But art shows to man's mind that which he would otherwise unconsciously be; so that even if, as some think, it flatters passion, it yet makes him aware of himself, and by putting him into a spiritual instead of a brutal relation with his feelings it delivers him from their tyranny. Lusts become emotions. Even tears in a certain sense express and so mitigate grief; and in higher degrees professional mourners, solemn music and elegies free us from our 'blind sunkenness' in despair. No theory, Hegel goes on, more definitely moral than this can be accepted. If art becomes one among other means of recommending good conduct, it is degraded, and true morality is not thereby furthered. But if it is knowledge of humanity, because knowledge of self and the possibilities of self, then, however alarming or humiliating, it can never be alien from our deepest need. With Ajax we must pray for light if it be but to die in; as indeed the Greeks, perhaps, could not see themselves and live:

> Ζεῦ, πάτερ, ἀλλὰ σὺ ῥῦσαι ὑπ' ἠέρος υἷας Ἀχαιῶν,
> Ποίησον δ' αἴθρην, δὸς δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι·
> Ἐν δὲ φάει καὶ ὄλεσσον, ἐπεὶ νύ τοι εὔαδεν οὕτως.[3]

[1] *The World as Will and Idea*, iii, *ad init.* and *passim*.

[2] *Aestetik*, Introduction, III. ii in Bosanquet's translation.

[3] *Il.*, xvii. 646. See note at end of chapter. [Nay Father Zeus, save thou the sons of the Achaians from this darkness, clear the sky and give light to their eyes. Slay us in light since to slay us is thy pleasure.]

18. In this sense it may be said art liberates man from his passions in giving him something else to do with them than to gratify them – to make them the object of his contemplation. But this distraction is not the differentia[1] of aesthetic experience nor its essence. All spiritual activity is true liberation; and that from which it liberates us is passivity or passion, from which we need to be free just because it is an inchoate and impeded activity. Philosophy, Religion, Action, Science, each in its own way removes the barriers against which some activity seemed to break itself, and all in their own way may be said to free us from the passions. But the essential thing about each is not that it distracts us from the others, but that it liberates us by its proper activity from its proper passivity or passion. The student of philosophy is perhaps not likely to be extremely violent or covetous. But this is not why we value philosophy, and the popular implication of the epithet 'philosophic', as 'calm', is refuted by conspicuous exceptions. The peculiar passion from which it frees us is curiosity, and that is just '*φιλοσοφία*' or intelligence impeded by the passivity of ignorance. The artistic experience frees us from the desire for expression, which just is the artistic activity or '*φιλοκαλία*' beating against the bars of ugliness and incoherence. Not only from pity and fear but from revenge and envy and the burden of every other emotion does art in a sense free us; yet from the burden of none of them simply but only as craving for expression, yet unexpressed and therefore ugly.

To be tormented with a passion for beauty, a sensitiveness to ugliness, is the condition of the aesthetic experience; to be blessed with the gratification of that passion is the realization of the experience itself. And it is the preoccupation with this desire rather than its attainment – except so far as appetite never fed is apt to be stifled – which may distract the mind alike from good or evil conduct; as it is scientific curiosity and not science which keeps the astronomer from his bed. That either should have these good or bad effects is extrinsic to them, and of no interest to a theory of art or to

[1] I am much indebted on this point to Professor J. A. Smith's lectures on *Some Errors in Aristotle's Theory of Poetry*. The view here adopted seems to be an improved and explicated form of that by which Hegel just succeeds in struggling free of the moralizing tradition; loc. cit. and cf. *Aesthetik*, vol. iii, p. 135.

philosophy, though properly to be considered by the moralist in approving an artistic or scientific act.

19. Here we seem to have found an account of the relation of art to morality which we may accept. If it is far enough from the literal meaning of Aristotle, and in almost direct contradiction to that of Plato, it may yet be the truth which they are endeavouring to divine. Its connection with Croce[1] is apparent, it is the rationalization of the intuitive feeling of poets from Milton[2] to Shelley, and if the moralists will accept it our reconciliation is not far off.[3] But it must be pointed out how far it is from their original statement. It admits if it does not necessitate Shelley's warning to the artist against directly embodying his own moral ideas in his work. It holds that art aims essentially at neither pleasure nor edification, but that we are better, more human, less brutal beings, for that aesthetic exercise in which we learn what the world of man's spirit, apart from our particular desires and convenience, really is.

This is a conclusion analogous to the one already reached as to the effect of natural beauty on character; the higher argument that they are really one conclusion, that all beauty, natural or artistic, is really expressive and spiritual must be attempted later.

20. At present we may content ourselves with the saying of Pater:[4] 'To witness this spectacle (of life and nature) with appropriate emotions is the aim of all culture.' It is certainly what we mean by the aesthetic activity; and so far as a man's feelings are thus unselfishly adjusted he can hardly be unhappy or the cause of unhappiness, since in the language of St John of the Cross:[5] 'the Spiritual man has greater joy and comfort in creatures if he detaches himself

[1] *Estetica*, pp. 24, 183.

[2] *Samson Agonistes, ad fin.* Cf. Schiller, *Ueber ästetische Erziehung*, Brief 22: 'An art concerned with passion there is; but passionate art is a contradiction, for the inevitable result of artistic beauty is freedom from passions.'

[3] Those contemporary successors of the moralizing school who adopt the formula 'art for life' either make their point – *plus royalistes que le roi* – by defining life in terms of art, to the neglect of thought and conduct, or explain that art is a 'constituent means' to life, by which contradiction in terms they only intend what no sane man ever doubted, that it is but one of the things which are ends.

[4] *Appreciations: Wordsworth.* I suppose 'appropriate' means 'disinterested'.

[5] i. 298, quoted by von Hügel, *Mystical Element in Religion*, i. 68.

from them; and he can have no joy in them if he considers them as his own; . . . he rejoices in their truth . . . in their substantial worth.' To those who dislike such authority or its application to our subject we may quote another, hardly to be suspected of narrow moralization. 'Under the charm of Dionysiac (or tragic) art the bond between man and man is knitted up; even alien nature, hostile or enslaved, celebrates once more the reconciliation with man, her long-lost child.'[1]

What hindered Plato from any but the most intermittent glimpses of this truth, what more than any one thing cuts him off here from Hegel's explicitness and even from Aristotle's implication is his assumption that art imitates particular things. It is this Realistic Theory of art which we must now examine.

## NOTE ADDED TO SECOND EDITION

It is perhaps a mere chance that a Chinese poet of the third century AD translated by Mr Waley in the *Bulletin of Oriental Studies*, 1917, p. 49, paraphrased the doctrine of purgation:

*Tongues loosened and minds at one,*
*Hearts refreshed by discharge of emotion.*

More relevant to Hegel is Euripides, *Tro.* 120:

Μοῦσα δὲ χ' αὕτη τοῖς δυστήνοις
ἄτας κελαδεῖν ἀχορεύτους

Cf. *Med.* 190 et seq. [The Muse herself chants no festive fate to the unhappy.]

[1] Nietzsche, op. cit., p. 24, § 1.

CHAPTER IV

# The Realistic-typical Theory : Plato, Aristotle and the Eighteenth Century

---

1. The imitation theory of beauty applies strictly to art alone. There it is plausible, but not accurate nor applicable to all art. 2. 'Imitation of the universal.' Popularity of this maxim. 3. Taken seriously it is the negation of art. 4. But a more attractive interpretation of Aristotle is possible. 5. Professor Santayana on truth of character. 6. Truth in diction. 7. Residuum of value in the imitation theory. 8. Errors escaped by this interpretation: (1) Moralization, which follows from realism. 9. (2) Separation of natural from artistic beauty.

---

1. It has been already said that theories defining beauty as imitation have neglected nature and confined themselves to the representative sphere even of art. It is true that the Greeks held music to be imitative, not in the vulgar sense of reproducing the squeaking of pulleys or the crowing of cocks, but in the representation, which they ascribed to it, of character. And in this sense no doubt dancing, architecture[1] and the key-pattern may imitate character; and why should not nature for those to whom, as to Byron, 'high mountains are a feeling', or who have Wordsworth's passion for the

[1] *Roh nennt man edel, unbehülflich gross,*
*Schmal-Pfeiler lieb' ich, strebend, gränze-los;*
*Spitzbögiger Zenith erhebt den Geist,*
*Solch' ein Gebau erbaut uns allermeist.*
(Goethe, *Faust*, II. i, *ad fin.*)

[What is crude men call noble and what is awkward grand, my passion is for slender columns infinitely yearning. A mountain in mid-heaven uplifts the soil; with such a spire my soul aspires.]

cataract or Swinburne's for the sea? It is a loss that Plato did not explicitly tell us whether he would regard the 'imitation' by music of a human soul, as the imitation of a particular thing itself twice removed from reality.[1] But in any case it is clear that the theory of imitation thus loosely interpreted has so lost form and body as to be unrecognizable to its parents. The object of our criticism must be more definite. We must ask what is meant by saying that the essence of art is imitation of persons, natural objects or movements. Perhaps it is from confessions of pictorial artists that the theory has derived most support in recent years, though the fashion now seems to be changing; but the novelist, the dramatist, even, in a less degree, the poet, have had not a little to urge. The subject of a painting has usually been recognizable, or however pleasing a pattern it was not called a picture; though in the 'hypothetical judgement' of a story we may tolerate almost any initial improbability, it is still toleration, and it is always for the sake of the truthful concatenation, the description of what a man *would* do or feel if he won a lottery or found a magic sword, that we tolerate it. Modern 'abstract' artists often give their designs names implying that they 'imitate', or perhaps suggest, states of mind such as imprisonment.

We may prefer strange situations just as we may the photograph of an earthquake, but on the whole there is no higher praise for the writer than that his events are natural, his characters true, and their language like that really used by men. The recorded efforts of Greek sculptors[2] after truthful rendering of hair, veins, muscles, pose and proportion go far to justify Plato. The laborious studies by Turner, Constable, Monet, of mountain and mist, cloud and sunlight, substantiate the teaching of Ruskin.[3] But Ruskin at least knew that the notion of imitation is not so simple but that we must come to closer quarters with it.[4] To imitate a chair is the task of the least artistic

[1] In *Phaedo*, 79, we are told that the soul is rather of the nature of the unchangeable, as are the ideas. But the context is too different for us to draw any conclusion for our question. If anything is immaterial is it indestructible?

[2] Pliny, *N.H.*, xxxiv. 57, 60.

[3] *Modern Painters*, II. i, ch. i, § 8; IV. iii, §§ 13–16; *Two Paths*, i. 19 and *passim*, modified, of course, elsewhere *passim*.

[4] Ibid., I. i, ch. iv.

kind of carpenter; and monkeys, with negligible poetic gifts, are probably better mimics of action than most men. Almost in one breath Plato complains that painters merely imitate and that by imitating in two dimensions they give the appearance without the matter. Illusion even, as in the waxwork or realistically coloured statue, is seldom the artist's aim; there must at least be a recognizable difference to allow for the pleasure of recognition which Aristotle, rather slightingly perhaps, suggests as the charm of portraiture.[1]

Again, if the beauty of these arts is their mimicry, then either there are two beauties or nature and the decorative arts are not beautiful. And even if music be allowed, for the sake of argument and without prejudice, to be an imitation, architecture, ceramics, weaving and dancing make good their claim, together with the greater glories of land, sea, sky and the body of man, to be beauty underived.

Imitation, in any natural sense of the word, has in fact never seemed to be the sole, even if a necessary, factor in art. The same race which by its study of nature had developed the Parthenon pediments from those of the Triton and of Typhon[2] gave as the highest praise to the masterpiece of Pheidias that it added something to the very conception of Zeus.[3]

Plato, himself, forgetful of his theory, tells us that a statue is none the worse for being more beautiful than any man,[4] since it is in the nature of things that fiction should be truer than fact.[5] And plainly, if the artist confined himself, with his inadequate material, to imitation, his lifeless mimicry could only inspire tedium and disgust. From his stockish marble or most liberal chinese white we should

[1] *Poetics*, 1448*b*, 16.

[2] Illustrated in Collignon, *Histoire de la Sculpture Grecque*, vol. i, pp. 207–10.

[3] Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.*, xii. 10. 9; cf. the distinction ascribed to Apollonius of Tyana between imitation of what has been seen and fancy of what has not. Philostratus, II. xxii; VI. xix. In the first passage he contends that imitation is present no less in the imaginative act by which we find figures in the clouds than in portraiture. In the second he prefers Greek representation of the gods to Indian symbolism.

[4] *Rep.*, 472.

[5] 473. *πρᾶξιν λέξεως ἧττον ἀληθείας ἐφάπτεσθαι.* Cf. 402*c* and 500*e*. [Does not the word express more than the action?]

'turn To yonder girl that fords the burn', or to the sun in heaven, for life and movement, splendour and luminosity.[1]

The school of Futurists in a recent manifesto, if I remember rightly, described all past art as purely imitation; and to mark the completeness of their revolt adumbrated the desire to carve a man with motor-wheels on his legs. This would seem not less imitative than a centaur, an angel or a Siva, though it rather suggests the chilly symbolism of the balance and the cornucopia. Surely their reaction is too narrowly directed against the vacant dexterity of much recent Italian sculpture in gauze and open-work; just as their rejection of 'beauty' is simply an acceptance of the philistine folly that everything is ugly which is not appetizing. Purely unimitative beauty has always existed in nature, in architecture and in arabesque.

2. Aristotle in his account of tragedy did not reject the traditional term 'imitation', but gives it a new turn by suggesting[2] that the historical untruth of art criticized by Plato arises just because poetry 'tends to tell us the universal, history the particular; and the universal tells what kind of things a given kind of person comes to do according to probability or necessity. This is what poetry aims at though it gives names to the characters. The particular is for example what Alcibiades did or suffered.'[3] It was not Aristotle's concern to emend Plato by any reference to the Ideas.[4] But he must have been conscious that here he definitely joins issue with the doctrine that art imitates particular things. In what sense are we to understand that it imitates the universal? Various interpretations have been made,[5] but the one which has been most often accepted is perhaps

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, v. iii, § 1.

[2] *Poetics*, 1451*b*, 6.

[3] Cf. *Poetics*, 1461*b*, 11.

[4] Cf. Plotinus, *Ennead*, v. viii. 1.

[5] Mr Courthope, in *Life in Poetry, Law in Taste*, explains the universal as 'an idea of universal interest', 'whatever is furnished naturally to the poet's conception by forces outside himself; the sources of inspiration springing from the religion, tradition, civilization, education of the country to which he belongs', as against 'the individual element', 'including all that is contributed by the genius of the poet' (pp. 76, 89). 'What is meant by the Universal in dramatic poetry is a situation of general interest' (p. 258). Whatever the value of this distinction, it is clearly not the one in Aristotle's mind.

the least acceptable of any, though it has been extended from tragedy to the whole of art. It has been held that the sculptor,[1] the painter[2] and the poet[3] are to avoid mimicry of the individual with his characteristic peculiarities and defects and to present as it were a composite photograph of the species.

Here again our direct interest is not in the philological interpretation of Aristotle, but in discovering what the truth is which almost all writers about art have agreed in feeling to be either expressed or suggested by his statement.

3. Rymer is angry with Shakespeare because his Iago, though a soldier, is hypocritical;[4] Dennis because his senators are not sufficiently senatorial.[5] Dr Johnson[6] retorts that Shakespeare, wanting a buffoon, went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him; yet he himself holds that nothing can please many and please long but just representations of general nature. This is the interpretation of artistic universality as generality; of which will hold good the rule of the formal logicians, that connotation varies inversely as denotation, that the more people a picture is like the less it is like any of them. Far from being, as is suggested, the sole proper method for the poet, it is simply the method of allegory or personification, entering perhaps more aptly or more often into sculpture and drama than into pictures or novels, but not the only method or the highest even there. It would lead us consistently away from Shakespeare, as in ascending stages, through French tragedy and Latin comedy, to the Moralities; from persons whom, however peculiar, we seem to know, through personifications of passion, and typical slaves or fathers, to that 'unearthly ballet of bloodless' abstractions performed by Bobadil, Uriah Heep and

[1] Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, IV. ii.

[2] Reynolds advises the painter (*Discourses*, iii.) to 'consider Nature in the abstract and represent in every one of his figures the character of its species'.

[3] Dr Johnson, *Preface to Shakespeare*.

[4] *Short View of Tragedy*. 'He would pass upon us a close, dissembling, false, insinuating rascal, instead of an open-hearted, frank, plain-dealing Souldier, a character constantly worn by them for some thousands of years in the World.'

[5] *On the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare*.

[6] *Preface to Shakespeare*. Apparently Johnson means by 'general nature' simply true human nature, but on this point he had not cleared his mind.

Mr Worldly Wiseman, and presided over by Everyman himself.[1] Once started on the incline of generalization we find nothing to stop us. If it is not an individual we are to represent but a senator, why a senator rather than a Roman, or a Roman rather than a man in general, or a man rather than a living creature? Generalize your characters sufficiently and you have but one. In truth we desire nothing of the kind, nor could the artist give it to us, for a generalization can be thought but not imagined; we may imagine clearly or vaguely, but the image is always an individual whose indeterminateness would be only the result of defective imagination. It is perhaps possible to imagine a person all covetousness or all purity, or all parental affection, or extraordinarily ordinary, as it is possible to imagine a satyr; but these fabulous individuals will be less, not more, like the generality of men. The upholders of 'general' or 'specific' nature in the arts must make up their minds if they want ordinary characters or characters possessed by a single passion.[2] In neither case will they get a generality, and in neither case, though they may get good art, will they get the only kind of good art.

4. Hamlet is both a very unusual and a very complex character; he is vividly imagined, which is to say that he is a thoroughly concrete individual, yet for that reason I believe that he satisfies all which we legitimately mean by our demand for the artistic 'universal'; he acts and speaks as a man of such a character and in his situation necessarily or probably would. The truthful historian of Denmark could hardly have achieved this 'universality' or consistently imaginable character, for but few events can be observed in life with that internal probability or possibility which makes the presentation of them artistic.[3] The historian must deal with a collec-

[1] It need hardly be said that some of these characters are very good fun – for exaggeration is easily funny – and that one of them is something more. Cf. Eckermann's *Gespräche mit Goethe*, 29 October 1823. For the 'ludicrous' see Appendix A.

[2] Cf. Schelling, *Ueber das Verhaltniss der bildenden Künste zu der Natur*: 'If once everything positive and characteristic (*wesentlich*) were abstracted from form, the latter must appear as limiting, and hostile to, the characteristic content (*das Wesen*). The same theory which has evolved the false and flimsy "Ideal" must necessarily result in artistic formlessness. In any case the form must limit the content (*das Wesen*) if it were independent thereof; but if the form has its being in and through the content (*das Wesen*) how could the latter feel itself limited by that which it has itself created?'

[3] *Poetics*, 1451*b*, 32.

tion of acts apparently accidental, arbitrary and unconvincing. The poet creates an individual every atom of which should be organically connected with every other, thoroughly consistent even in its extremest and most lifelike inconsistency.[1]

Croce has put this well when he says that if Don Quixote is a type he is a type of all the Don Quixotes. And I do not think there is any difficulty in supposing it to be essentially the idea which was in Aristotle's[2] mind. But the difference between this universality of absolutely realized unity – as opposed to a collection of facts merely given – and the generality so often desiderated by its misinterpreters is so well set out by Professor Santayana that I venture to quote him at some length:[3]

[1] *Poetics*, 1461*b*, 15. Possibly the *σμικραὶ μεταβολαί* [small changes] in music and *πρέπουσα ἁρμονία* [true harmony] desired by Plato imply a feeling after this truth (*Rep.*, 397*b*). Cf. Croce, *Estetica*, IV, p. 41: 'People have sometimes talked of poetic or artistic universals to indicate that the artistic product is essentially and absolutely spiritual and ideal.' Münsterberg (*The Eternal Values*) makes emotional unity in a complexity of impressions the sole characteristic of beauty.

[2] Compare the doctrine of modern logicians that 'Universality' is a matter not of quantity but of necessity (F. H. Bradley, *Principles of Logic*, I. ii. 44). Though Aristotle sometimes defines the Universal as 'that which can be predicted of more than one' (*De Interp.*, 17*a*, 39), he also tells us that 'the value of the universal is that it reveals causal connection' (*Analyt. Post.*, 88*a*, 4), and the general doctrine of the *Poetics* is just that tragedy gets its effect by its convincing concatenation of character and events with actions (1454*a*, 33), every part of the whole being so structurally organized that the displacement or removal of any one will disturb and dislocate the whole (1451*a*, 30). The last passage is specially pertinent, as it immediately precedes that which introduces the conception of Universality. Indeed, the whole context, being a contrast of tragedy, and in a less degree epic (1462*a*, 3), with history, almost necessitates an interpretation of *τὸ καθόλου* [the universal] as the negation of *συμβεβηκὸς* or accident (cf. *Met.*, 1026*b*, 3, 1065*a*, 8) rather than as the covering of a multitude. It is the Unity of Plot which gives a poem individuality and distinguishes it from history, that is, gives it 'universality' by excluding all that cannot be imaginatively synthesized (1459*a*, 17). Butcher (op. cit., p. 254), aptly quotes *Probl.*, 917*b*, 9, et seq. Bosanquet (*The Principle of Individuality and Value*, ch. II) instances a work of art – though without citing the Aristotelian doctrine – to support his view that the universal and individual are identical, or rather that the truth of both these conceptions is only to be found in something called the Concrete Universal. Without discussing his argument we can see from it how the individuality of art may have been confused with generality.

[3] *The Sense of Beauty*, pp. 177, 179, 184; cf. Schelling, *Ueber das Verhältniss der bildenden Künste zu der Natur*: 'The artist must turn his back upon the product and the creature, but only that he may elevate himself in spiritual comprehension to the creative force.' Schelling is here speaking of plastic form. But on his theory of nature the conclusion would be the same for all beauty. For not only 'the soul is form and doth the

5. 'We may keep a note-book in our memory, or even in our pocket, with studious observations of the language, manners, dress, gesture and history of the people we meet, classifying our statistics under such heads as innkeepers, soldiers, housemaids, priests and professors. . . . But it is not by this method that the most famous or most living characters have been conceived. This method gives the average, or at most the salient, points of the type, but the great characters of poetry – a Hamlet, a Don Quixote, an Achilles – are no averages, they are not even a collection of salient traits common to certain classes of men. They seem to be persons – that is, their actions and words seem to spring from the inward nature of an individual soul. Goethe is reported to have said that he conceived the character of his Gretchen entirely without observation of originals. And, indeed, he would probably have not found any. His creation rather is the original to which we may occasionally think we see some likeness in real maidens. It is the fiction here that is the standard of naturalness. And in this as on so many occasions we may repeat the saying that poetry is truer than history. Perhaps no actual maid ever spoke and acted so naturally as this imaginary one. . . .

'In themselves, if we could count all their undiscovered springs of action, all men have character and consistency alike: all are equally fitted to be types. But their characters are not equally intelligible to us, their behaviour is not equally deducible, and their motives not equally appreciable. . . . The poet then need not keep a note-book. There is a quicker road to the heart – if he has the gift to find it. Probably his readers will not themselves have kept note-books, and his elaborate observations will only be effective when he describes something which they also happen to have noticed. The typical characters describable by the empirical method are therefore few: the miser, the lover, the old nurse, the *ingénue*, and the other types of traditional comedy. Any greater specification would appeal only to

body make', which is in a sense true on any theory, but 'everybody knows that greatness, purity and goodness of soul have also their sensible expression. How would this be understood unless the active principle in matter itself were also a being like to soul and akin thereto?' Schopenhauer also (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii, § 44) applies this interpretation of universality to all the arts.

a small audience for a short time, because the characteristics depicted would no longer exist to be recognized. But whatever experiences a poet's hearers may have had, they are men. . . . The poet has only to study himself and the art of expressing his own ideals, to find that he has expressed those of other people.'[1]

6. This seems to be the truth. What the artist must always imitate, or, as we prefer to say, express, is, as Plato saw in describing music, his own passions and volitions. It is solely for the sake of this expressiveness, as Plotinus indicates, that we value works of art; and when it is attained it will be a harmoniously organized, individual whole and universally communicable. Such an expression is sometimes found in natural objects, and in language really used by men. When this is so the artist's supreme achievement is selection. But if Tolstoy or Wordsworth is led in defending a theory to imply that expression always is or must be thus attained, and that there is no value in the suggested reminiscences of poetic diction or the studied intricacies of rhythm; if they try to persuade us that the *Bacchus and Ariadne*, 'the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces', 'the proud full said of some great verse', 'the self-begotten bird in Arabian woods imbossed' and 'Lancelot and Pelleas and Pellenore' are either the common sights and language of the country or not beautiful, they fall into the rationalizing fallacy of the Augustans and commend only the naturalness of Fanny Burney's young friend who 'Nothing would she talk of but Dear Nature, and nothing abuse but Odious Affectation'.[2]

7. The plausibly simple formula of imitation has displayed a protean susceptibility to manipulation, but does in the end seem to yield up a truth it had from the first concealed. Starting with the view that artists imitate particular natural existences, we are driven by its obvious difficulties to suppose that their method is rather selection; and asking for the principle by which the 'idealization' is guided, if we avoid the moralistic irrelevancy of 'goodness' and the tautologous circle of 'beauty', we fall back upon a quantitative

[1] See note A at end of chapter, and cf. Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: 'Truth which is its own testimony' (alluding to Aristotle).

[2] *Diary* (edited by A. Dobson), i, p. 414.

notion of generality. But this upon analysis turns to a consistent intuitability, or imaginable individuality which may be considered a truth of coherence or consistency rather than of correspondence to facts.

'If some people really see angels where others see only empty space, let them paint the angels; only let not anybody else think *he* can paint an angel too, on any calculated principles of the angelic.'[1] 'A play,' says Dryden with insight worthy of a cause better than the dramatic couplet, 'to be like nature must be set above it';[2] and Reynolds, though less precisely, is on the same track. 'Whatever pleases has in it what is analogous to the mind, and is therefore in the highest and best sense natural.'[3] 'The great end . . . is to make an impression on the imagination and the feeling. The imitation of nature frequently does this. Sometimes it fails, and something else succeeds.' Romance itself is only the passion which is in the face of all realism.

In demanding universality, then, we demand that the work of art shall exhibit neither the apparently accidental and unmeaning collocations of the annalist nor the arbitrary and mechanical joinery of the poet's frigid fancy, but shall convince us of its truth, or its right to a place in the real, the really imaginable world. Art is not a charming idiosyncrasy nor a dexterous feat, but a universally communicable truth, though a truth perceived immediately and by no comparison with any external pattern—a true expression. This valuable kernel of the imitation doctrine was laid bare and preserved by Plotinus,[4] for an end of his own. 'Whenever we admire a representation our delight is really directed to what is represented. That we should be unconscious of this is not surprising, for so are lovers, and all who delight in the beauty that they see without knowing that it is for the sake of *that which is not seen*.'

8. Undoubtedly this conception of artistic truth needs further

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, ii, § 2.

[2] *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. Also: 'Tragedy, we know, is wont to image to us the minds and fortunes of noble persons, and to portray these exactly; heroic rhyme is nearest Nature, as being the noblest kind of modern verse.' See note B at end of chapter.

[3] *Discourses*, vii, xiii.

[4] *Ennead*, v. viii. 8.

elucidation. At present, besides the fact that it does no violence to the aesthetic consciousness and may plausibly claim to be the natural development of the realistic and generalizing theories, it is seen to have, as against these last, two merits.

In the first place, it has quite transported us from the sphere of that moralistic condemnation which so naturally followed from the notion that art is copying. If art makes us know 'the individual' it can hardly be an enemy of true morality, which is poorly flattered by those who think its practice depends on our deception by poetic justice, idealization and other meretricious baits. If indeed with Aristotle[1] we want to see what can be said for art by the statesman as well as on its proper merits[2] we may plead that the drama, like morality, deals with individuals which are persons in definite situations; and though these are not the identical persons or situations with which our conduct has to deal, and there is no exact inference from individual to individual, yet the intuitive faculty for apprehending the worth, the needs and the deserts of a friend or an opponent is sharpened and quickened by exercise whether on the individuals of art or of life. Lamb[3] in criticizing the sentimental drama of his day says: 'We turn away from the real essences of things to hunt after their relative shadows, moral duties: whereas, if the truth of things were fairly represented, the relative duties might be safely trusted to themselves.'

9. Secondly, we have in some degree overcome the separation which the emphasis on imitation seemed to have effected between the beauty of representation and that of the formal arts and nature. Aristotle, as we have seen, allows for the possibility that here and there an actual occurrence may be apprehended in all the coherence and lucidity with which the artist should always express himself. The same relation will hold between visible nature and painting or sculpture. An attempt must be made to show how even beauties of what would be called the most formal kind have a quality analogous

[1] *Politics*, loc. cit.

[2] *Poetics*, 1460*b*, 13. For the connexion of Poetic Justice with idealization, cf. *Spectator* 40, *Tatler* 82, and Dr Johnson on *King Lear*.

[3] *Specimens of Dramatic Poets* (Moxon), i. 163, note on Rowley, *A New Wonder*.

to this 'universality' or imaginative individuality which Aristotle demands for poetic fiction; how we can understand what Plato meant when he said that only in what is beautiful, and in everything that is beautiful is our apprehension actually in harmony with the real:[1] how we can even have some inkling of Schopenhauer's thought in his dark saying that music gives us the *Universalia ante rem*, the underlying natures of things.[2]

## NOTES ADDED TO SECOND EDITION

A. The universality rightly ascribed to a successful artistic communication is not that it has drawn a portrait like many people, but that it has really expressed and communicated a real human feeling. If we find it expressive that must be because it expresses a potentiality of our own; and we thereby recognize the kinship of our minds to the artist's, both in feeling and expression, a kinship which ideally extends to all humanity. Cf. p. 75 *infra*.

B. Metre in drama is natural, not because men normally use verse, but because dramatists do. Dramatists naturally write verse because most men, in moments of strong feeling, having the poetic impulse to express it, tend to fall into some rudely rhythmic mode of utterance or movement. Cf. Chap. X *infra*.

[1] *Phaedrus*, 250*d*. et. seq. are the chief passages which I have ventured thus widely to interpret; cf. Plotinus, loc. cit.

[2] *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii, § 52.

CHAPTER V

# Intellectualist Theories: Kant and Coleridge

1. Motives and merits of Kant's general aesthetic procedure. Distinction of formal from expressive beauty. 2. Design of the Critique of Judgement. 3. Aesthetic approval, being possible for all, but referring to no quality or ideal of the object, must refer to a free harmony of our faculties. So the object seems designed for perception. 4. Distinction of aesthetic from logical and moral judgements; and from sensation. 5. Does the judgement of beauty precede or follow pleasure? 6. Kant's answer implies four pleasures, one preceding and two following the purely aesthetic one. 7. Merits and defects of Kant's theory. 8. Obscure points: (1) Universal validity of taste. 9. (2) From validity follows communicability and from harmony the idea of design. 10. Errors: (1) The separation of free from dependent beauty. 11. This error leads him back to the moralistic fallacy. 12. (2) The separation of art from nature. (3) The separation of genius from taste. 13. Coleridge's version of Kant.

1. It is not the least merit of Kant's philosophy of beauty[1] that, whatever the difficulty of its method and its conclusions, it deals directly with the crux of the situation. In earlier, and indeed in later, writers we are constantly brought up, amid some general considerations as to imitation and expression or truth and goodness

[1] *Die Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, Part I, published 1790. The pre-critical *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1764) may perhaps be neglected by the student of aesthetics, though not by the historian of taste nor the collector of dry or unconscious humours. There is a translation of the *Critique of Judgement* by Bernard. Some illustrations of the development of Kant's theory may be found in his *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie*, I. ii. B; *Vom Gefühl fur das Schöne: Vom Genie*, in *Kant's Schriften*, XV Berlin, 1913). But these are only disconnected jottings.

by the desire of asking what relation all this may have to the beauty of a tree or a Persian carpet, a fugue or a tracery. The components of our pleasure in Michelangelo or Milton are so many and various that the first step to elucidation is Kant's refreshing self-denial in confining himself to simpler instances. It is, I think, clear that, with a nature not especially susceptible or accustomed to beauty, he especially felt the temptation of admitting extraneous considerations of morality or philosophy in a discussion of poetry or painting. In avoiding this he actually falls into an opposite error of excluding from the realm of pure beauty (*pulchritudo vaga*)[1] all representative art and animate nature on the ground that they are adulterated with moral or empirical conceptions (*pulchritudo adhaerens*).[2] But whatever the motives or the dangers of his specialization, it was an indispensable step to his inquiry. His main object was to show that the satisfaction derived from beauty is not, as Hume[3] had maintained, sensuous, arbitrary, empirical and subjective. He is prepared for an aesthetic battle analogous to the one which he has fought for knowledge; and as that turned on the 'synthetic judgements *a priori*' of pure mathematical intuition, so here he believes that the key of the situation is our judgement of a pleasure universally communicable, yet independent of concepts. In other words, why do we say: 'This is a pretty pattern', and believe ourselves to be speaking objective truth, though we have no interest in the thing, no notion of any purpose which it serves, and no moral or scientific concept of what type of thing it ought to be?[4] If by our answer we can secure this humble position from the enemy, the higher fields of beauty, so

[1] Cf. Kames (Home), *Elements of Criticism*, 1762 (trans. into German, 1762–63). He makes this distinction and gives the same examples of each kind as Kant. See Wohlgemuth, *Henry Home's Aesthetik und ihr Einfluss auf Deutsche Aesthetik* (Berlin, 1893). Hutcheson, *Enquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty*, 1725, had made a somewhat similar distinction, but his 'relative beauty' is good imitation.

[2] § 16. The beauty of an arabesque is pure; that of a man, horse, or portrait is conditioned by our conception of its ideal, function or original.

[3] *A Treatise of Human Nature*, II. i. 8; II. ii. 5; III. iii. 1; and *Essays*, xviii, 'The Sceptic'; xxiii, 'The Standard of Taste'.

[4] Cf. Home, *Elements*, xxv, and Addison on 'Imagination' (*Spectator*, Nos. 411 et seq.), i, 'not so gross as sense nor so refining as understanding'; also for absence of interest, see ii.

tempting for the magnificent manoeuvring of the rhetoricians, can be left to take care of themselves.

2. Only half of the Critique of Judgement is concerned with Taste; the second part deals with teleological judgement. By teleology Kant intends not the supposed external adjustment of things to the service of man or of one another, but the fact that the biologist is unable to conceive or investigate living things on the purely mechanical methods which are sufficient for the physicist, since their parts are not merely juxtaposed in space but organized as reciprocally means and ends. The fundamental principle connecting these two treatises is obscured in the existing introduction, on the difficulties of which some light is thrown by the treatise *Ueber Philosophie überhaupt*, itself originally designed as a preface but rejected as incomprehensible.

The connexion appears to be this. The most general and axiomatic laws of nature, such as the laws of the Uniformity of Nature, or Universal Causation, we regard as self-evidently necessary, or, on the Kantian system, 'our understanding prescribes them to nature'. That they should be fulfilled by all events, therefore, is no source of wonder or gratification. We simply cannot conceive of any other possibility. But as a matter of fact we further find, even among laws empirically discovered, a harmony, a systematic and intelligible connexion which could not have been foretold from the *a priori* axioms, and yet seem cognate to our understanding. The presupposition that this will be so is implied in every act of research into nature, yet its fulfilment always comes as a surprise and a delight. It seems as if the world had been designed simply so as to be intelligible; it might have been no worse otherwise, but it would have been inexplicable to us; and so, though we may not say that it *is* so designed, 'since the reflective[1] judgement gives principles

[1] Our ordinary judgements are 'determinant', that is, they subsume particulars under universals given by the understanding. Of this kind are the judgements of inorganic science and practical life. The 'reflective' judgement subsumes particulars under a principle which it does not borrow from experience. Of this kind are our aesthetic judgements, and also those teleological ones which the science of living organism employs – those judgements, in short, which use such predicates as beautiful, alive, individual. Cf. Frost, *Begriff der Urtheilskraft bei Kant.*

not to nature but to itself', we are justified in thinking of it *as if it were*.

Under this general statement will come the apparently designed intelligible system of natural laws, of which Kant here says no more; the apparently designed internal adaptations of living individuals (or species)[1] which is the subject of Part II, into which we cannot follow him; and the somewhat different case of things judged to be beautiful. The last please us, but the pleasure is unconnected either with desire or with any concept of what the object ought to be. It is in this last point that they differ from living organisms, for though we do not know what external purposes each of these may serve, we have the vague concept of its own life, well-being and reproduction as something which the co-ordination of its parts ought to secure.

3. Now the pleasure accompanying a perception is a subjective element which tells us nothing about the nature of the object. And if we have pleasure merely in apprehending the form of an object, without referring it to any concept – without any idea what sort of a thing it is meant to be – that can imply nothing but the harmony of the object with our knowing faculties[2] as they come into play in reflectively judging it. That is to say, what pleases us is the adaptation of the form of the object to our faculties.[3] We are bound to think of it as designed not for any particular end but just for human perception.[4] And since in this perception it is the form – that is to

[1] Cf. Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*, i, p. 95.

[2] The harmony of the object with our faculties consists in the fact that they (understanding and imagination) harmonize *with one another* in its apprehension, though their interaction is not regulated by a conception of the understanding as in scientific cognition. I endeavour to avoid discussion of Kant's theory of knowledge. See p. 68.

[3] This appears to be modified in an important way in § 9. See below, p. 69.

[4] When the aspect of the relation emphasized is the adaptation of the object to our faculties it is called beautiful; when rather a certain adaptation of our faculties to its force or greatness, it is called sublime. See below, Chap. IX. Cf. Addison, 'Imagination' (*Spectator* Nos. 411 et seq.): 'This faculty is pleased with Greatness, Novelty and Beauty.' In the last case it is a 'secret satisfaction', perhaps subjective in the case of colour, in 'anything that hath such a variety or regularity as may seem the effect of Design in what we call Works of Chance' (iv). It is worth while observing Kant's obligations to Addison, which seem to be very great, especially in his treatment of the Sublime, and to other English writers, as they diminish the sense of bewildering

say, the objective element intellectually apprehended (*e.g.* shape) – not the matter – that is to say, the subjective sensuous element (e.g. sweetness) – which pleases us, we can explain our judgement that the pleasure is necessarily involved in the perception of the object, not for ourselves only, but for every rational being. This is expressly applied both to artistic and natural beauties, and Kant believes that no other theory can explain the paradox that pleasure, which is a subjective feeling, should yet be judged as necessarily connected with the perception of an object. From the conception of a thing you can never argue to its pleasantness, but only to its own properties. To say a thing 'is pleasant' is an empirical judgement, which can no more be deduced from a concept than any other empirical judgement such as that 'it is on the table'. Such a judgement as this latter of course claims to be valid for all men, but the former does not, unless the pleasure predicated is of the particular kind called aesthetic. Then only arises the problem for which Kant claims to have discovered the solution: how can a judgement, empirical and depending on no conception, and predicating no quality of the object, but only our subjective feeling, claim to be valid for all men?[1]

4. The early part of the treatise (§§ 1–8) is mainly occupied with justifying the assumptions of this introduction. Kant substantiates the statements that the aesthetic judgement gives no information about the nature of the object; that it is not connected with desire or interest as are our judgements on the pleasant and the good; that it claims universal validity though this claim does not proceed, as in all other cases where it is made, from concepts. He distinguishes carefully the aesthetic judgement on the form of an object or on the arrangement of colour, movements or sounds from what he believes, though uncertainly, to be the merely sensuous pleasure of a single pure tone or shade. Lastly, he explains how judgements of

remoteness which his systematic technology is apt to cause. Cf. Candrea, *Der Begriff des Erhabenen bei Burke und Kant* (Strassburg, 1894), and Neumann, *Die Bedeutung Home's für die Aesthetik* (Halle, 1894).

Addison's papers were translated into German, 1739–45, by Frau Gottsched. Some of his resemblance to Kant, but not all, may be explained by their common indebtedness to the *De Sublimitate*. The debt may be through Bodmer and Breitinger.

[1] Cf. Home, *Elements*, xxv: 'There is a rule for taste, but a subjective one.'

taste can be true, though not demonstrable, and how this claim to universal validity comes to be unsatisfied.

5. It is in the ninth section that he advances beyond the positions already indicated. He here propounds the question whether in a judgement of taste (*Geschmacksurtheil*) the feeling of pleasure precedes or follows the judging (*Beurtheilung*) of the object, and assures us that his answer will be worthy of all attention as it is the key to the Critique of Taste. His answer is that if pleasure came first it would be merely sensuously agreeable and could not therefore be other than subjective. It is, then, the universal communicability of our state of mind which precedes and occasions our pleasure; and this state of mind is the free harmony with one another of those faculties of perception whose activity is necessary for any knowledge.[1] But of this harmonious relation between our powers we become aware by feeling, and Kant does not consistently make it clear that this feeling is not itself pleasant.[2]

[1] 'So kann er (d.h. *der Bestimmungsgrund des Urtheils*) *kein anderer als der Gemüthszustand sein*, der im Verhältnisse der Vorstellungskräfte zu einander angetroffen wird, sofern sie eine gegebene Vorstellung auf Erkenntniss überhaupt beziehen.'

[2] The importance which Kant himself imputes to this point justifies a collection of passages. (*a*) *Einleitung*, vii: 'Wessen Gegenstandes Form (nicht das Materielle seiner Vorstellung als Empfindung) in der blossen Reflexion über dieselbe (ohne Absicht auf einen von ihm zu erwerbenden Begriff) als der Grund einer Lust an der Vorstellung eines solchen Objects beurtheilt wird, mit dessen Vorstellung wird diese Lust auch als nothwendig verbunden geurheilt.' (*b*) (also in vii) 'Aber sie (d.h. die Lust) ist doch der Bestimmungsgrund dieses Urtheils nur dadurch, dass man sich bewusst ist, sie beruhe bloss auf der Reflexion,' u.s.w., cf. § 34. (*c*) *Ueber Philosophie überhaupt* (Hartenstein, vol. vi), p. 389: 'Wenn nämlich die Reflexion über eine gegebene Vorstellung vor dem Gefühle der Lust (als Bestimmungsgrund des Urtheils) vorhergeht, so wird die subjective Zweckmässigkeit gedacht, ehe sie in ihrer Wirkung empfunden wird.' (*d*) Ibid., p. 393: 'Das ästhetische Reflexionsvermögen urtheilt also nur über subjective Zweckmässigkeit (nicht über Vollkommenheit) des Gegenstandes, und es fragt sich da, ob nur vermittelst der dabei empfundenen Lust oder Unlust, oder sogar über diesselbe, so dass das Urtheil zugleich bestimme, dass mit der Vorstellung des Gegenstandes Lust oder Unlust verbunden sein müsse.' The answer is said to depend on the question if such judgements imply universality and necessity. 'In diesem Falle würde das Urtheil zwar vermittelst der Empfindung der Lust oder Unlust, aber doch auch zugleich über die Allgemeinheit der Regel, sie mit einer gegebenen Vorstellung zu verbinden, durch das Erkenntnissvermögen (namentlich die Urtheilskraft) *a priori* etwas bestimmen. Sollte dagegen das Urtheil nichts, als das Verhältniss der Vorstellung zum Gefühle (ohne Vermittelung einer Erkenntnissprincips) enthalten, wie es beim ästhetischen Sinnenurtheil das Fall ist (welches weder ein Erkenntniss-, noch ein Reflexionsurtheil ist), so würden alle ästhetischen Urtheile ins bloss empirische Fach gehören.' (*e*) After this,

By this paradox, that the universal communicability of our state of mind is the cause of our aesthetic pleasure and indeed of our judgement that a thing is beautiful, we are reminded of Kant's moral paradox that it is the universal applicability of a maxim which is the reason as well as the sign of its rightness. He does not deal with the difficulty that the judgement upon ugliness would be equally universal but painful.

6. Kant's analysis, then, of the mental process contained in what he calls the Judgement of Taste would appear to be as follows. Certain forms sometimes stimulate our faculties of Imagination and Understanding to a harmonious interaction, but without any concept, empirical or *a priori*, being suggested for the cognition, as would be the case if we were making a scientific or practical judgement. The interaction of these faculties, then, though perhaps not more harmonious than in ordinary perception, is more free (§ 9). Of this free interaction we become aware by a feeling[1] which is pleasant.[2] We then judge that this pleasure, or the relation causing it, results from mere reflection on the adaptation of the object's form to our judgement and is therefore universally valid for every rationally per-

---

§ 12 of the *K. d. U.* is again somewhat puzzling: 'Das Bewusstein der bloss formalen Zweckmässigkeit im Spiele der Erkenntnisskräfte des Subjects bei einer Vorstellung, wodurch ein Gegenstand gegeben wird, *ist die Lust selbst*.' (*f*) § 37: 'Also ist es nicht die Lust, sondern die Allgemeingiltigkeit dieser Lust, die mit der blossen Beurtheilung eines Gegenstandes im Gemüthe als verbunden wahrgenommen wird, welche *a priori* als allgemeine Regel für die Urtheilskraft, für jedermann giltig, in einem Geschmacksurtheile vorgestellt wird.' In this last statement, 'that the universal validity of the pleasure is represented as a law valid for all', Kant's scrupulosity of statement seems to pass into tautology. His own difficulty in maintaining all these distinctions may be illustrated by *Int.* vii: 'Ebenso macht derjenige, welcher in der blossen Reflexion über die Form eines Gegenstandes ohne Rücksicht auf einen Begriff *Lust empfindet*, ob zwar *dieses Urtheil* empirisch und ein Einzelnes Urtheil ist, mit Recht Anspruch auf jedermanns Beistimmung', where from the context with the preceding and following sentences it is, I think, clear that the term 'judgement' is applied to the 'feeling of pleasure' and not to the reflection. (The italics throughout this note and the last, except in the case of the words '*a priori*', are mine.)

[1] § 9: 'Bei einem Verhältnisse, welches keinen Begriff zum Grunde legt (wie das der Vorstellungskräfte zu einem Erkenntnissvermögen überhaupt) ist auch kein anderes Bewusstsein desselben als durch Empfindung . . . möglich.' [A relation not founded on a concept, (like that of the imagination to the intellect in general) cannot be conceived except by feeling.]

[2] See the passage quoted above from § 12.

ceptive being. And it is this judgement which gives us the specifically aesthetic pleasure.

It will be noticed that in this summary of various passages it is suggested that two distinct pleasures occur, which Kant, as far as I have discovered, nowhere explicitly says to be the case. But I can find no other way to harmonize the extracts given; especially the statements that we can only become aware of the relation of our faculties by feeling (§ 9), and that our consciousness of the purposiveness of our faculties in perception actually is the pleasure (§ 12) with the other that it is the universal communicability of our state of mind which precedes and causes the pleasure (§ 9).

Nor am I sure that Kant was not himself aware of this duplication. For in § 36 he asks 'How, merely from our private feeling of pleasure in a thing, without reference to any concept thereof, is an *a priori* judgement possible that this pleasure attaches to the representation of the same object by every other subject?'; where he can scarcely have forgotten the pronouncement – 'worthy of every attention as being the key to the Critique of Taste'—that the judgement of universal communicability precedes the pleasure.[1] It is difficult to resist the conclusion that here we have an example, which may be matched elsewhere in Kant, of—

*that false secondary power*
*By which we multiply distinctions.*

Or if we fancy we can detect in our aesthetic experience elements corresponding in some degree to all of Kant's stages, we are discouraged by the discovery that there are still two more pleasures connected with the judgement of beauty for which we must find a place. These are interests in the existence of the beautiful object and therefore only indirect consequents of the pure judgement of taste. The first is an empirical satisfaction which man as a social creature finds in the possibility of communicating certain of his feelings, so that a pleasure, in itself trifling, becomes valuable if it can be shared (§ 41). The second is an intellectual and *a priori* satisfaction in the beautiful forms of nature, though not of art, since Reason takes an

[1] § 9.

interest akin to moral interest in the fact that nature has provided for our disinterested satisfaction (§ 42).

In the complexities by which Kant has here become entangled over the question of subjective universality, subjective purposiveness and objective pleasure, we shall I believe find, as he prophesied, the key to understanding the Critique of Judgement and the test for distinguishing in it what must be rejected and what retained.

Leaving, however, for the present, detailed criticism, it will be useful to ask what, in the main results of the treatise, satisfies us and what leaves us discontented.

7. Everyone probably will agree with the implied assignment of the aesthetic activity to the cognitive side of our spirit and with the explicit distinction of it from knowledge of things on the one hand, no less than from practical activity on the other. The recognition of beauty is not, on the one hand, conceptual knowledge either empirical or *a priori*; it gives us no knowledge of the nature of things outside us, no 'objective' knowledge, at all. For beauty is no quality of the object and cannot be proved. Or, if we may put into our own language the conclusion to which Kant continually seems to be striving, but from which he always recoils, the aesthetic activity is the intuition of an individual as it is in itself, transcending or escaping the concepts both of science and of historical existence, and further this individual is in the last resort a state of our own mind. On the other hand, beauty is not to be identified either with the desirable or with the moral. Nor can it be confounded with sensation or with pleasant sensation. It is distinguished by an activity of the Imagination of which we become aware by a pleasant feeling. In all these mainly negative contentions we should, I think, agree with Kant, and find our agreement sanctioned by the opinion of most great thinkers upon the subject. Further, there are many points where, though we hesitate to give a final adherence, Kant's views impress us as valuable attempts to express elements really present, and command at all events our sympathetic consideration. Among these points are the universality which he attributes to the aesthetic judgement, at least regulatively,[1] as preceding its pleasure;

[1] § 22.

and the way in which he contrasts, while closely connecting, this pleasure with those resulting from communication and from the suspicion of a designing or at least spiritual cause of nature.

On the other hand we are, I think, quite dissatisfied with the great gulf which Kant has fixed between pure or formal beauty on the one side and expressive or adherent[1] beauty and sublimity on the other; with his analogous though less thorough separation of art and nature; and with his rejection of the beauties of music and colour as in the main unaesthetic because sensuous or emotional. And finally we find ourselves led with him into a fundamental difficulty by the very use of the word Judgement at all.

8. We may discuss in order first the dubious points, beginning with universality. Kant holds truly that in an aesthetic experience we do believe ourselves to be in some sense right; that to it, unlike our gustatory experiences, we give objective value, and for that reason endeavour to communicate it to others either by a work of art or by the less direct methods of criticism and artistic scholarship – activities which, apart from their somewhat confused claims to be considered as history, philosophy or science, must always, as propaedeutics to appreciation, aspire to be at least in part artistic.

It is this which we have already tried to express by saying that beauty is no mere subjective dream or fancy, however pleasant or thrilling, whose value depends on its being *my* fancy – as that I should think of myself as rich, or beloved, or inspired. Any of these 'fancies', so far as they have been described, might indeed be aesthetic, as it might be to fancy myself sick or a crossing-sweeper; it would be the way in which these things were imagined, not indeed merely fancied or pictured or thought of as logically possible, that would give the experience aesthetic value – that is, value for every human being who could share the imagination.[2] We wish others to have not merely pleasure, nor the pleasure merely of *some* aesthetic experience, but this valuable one itself; not instead of, but as well as their own; and this is not impossible – since all men are human and the aesthetic faculty is fundamental to human-

[1] See p. 64, *supra*, and 76 et seq. *infra*.

[2] Cf. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii, § 36, on 'Castle-building'.

ity – unless one or other of us has been conditioned. And though we cannot follow all the involutions already noticed in the doctrine that a judgement as to the universal communicability of our mental state precedes the pleasure of beauty, yet we can grant that the character of the aesthetic experience implies the claim that it is a right experience; that if any one else could be in exactly our situation,[1] in the same frame of mind, let us say, and confronted with the same physical stimulus, he ought to be able to make this aesthetic experience out of it, or else we have not made all that we might. If this were not so we should not attempt to communicate our experience. The discovery or creation of beauty differs from the passive pains and pleasures of sense because it is an activity that may perhaps be called intellectual, which is at least rational in the sense of not being arbitrary or accidental to our reason as physical tastes are.[2] Kant has confused the issue by talking of '*the* judgement on *the* beauty of an object'. His artificial abstraction of formal beauty makes him think of a thing as either beautiful or ugly, stimulating our faculties either to one particular interaction, which is harmonious, or to disharmony. He is aware that the judgement of taste gives no knowledge of the object and is always singular (§ 33), dealing, for example, with an individual given tulip. But he supposes the judgement to be 'The real shape of this object' (and if so, then, any object of this shape) 'is adapted to the perceptive faculties of all men'. Whereas the beauty which we discover in an individual vision of a tulip – colour, shape and all – is in truth an individual beauty, an expression of something only to be vaguely indicated as a feeling, perhaps, in a given instance, of full, proud and luxuriant life. If it is really an expression of something really felt it is 'true' and universally valid – that is to say, is really an *expression*; but it might very well happen that nobody else had this vision or these sensations, even in face of the tulip. Kant has abstracted form as the only

[1] Cf. Wordsworth to Wilson (*Letters*, iii. 439): 'Some take no interest in the description of a particular passion or quality as religion, and so forth, because they have little or nothing of it in themselves.' Conversely, those much preoccupied with a particular passion such as religion will specially appreciate its expression, and, like Ruskin, be apt to make it in their theories the only legitimate content of art.

[2] Cf. Croce, *Estetica*, pp. 87, 88.

aesthetic quality because he claims that form at least must be perceived alike by all men, and that therefore any judgements about it must be universally valid. But if the beauty were actually *in* the form it would be recognized universally, *de facto* as well as *de jure*, like the form itself; which he denies.[1] The mere colour, which Kant rejects, is indeed indifferent, but so in itself is mere form; both, to be expressive – and that is to be beautiful – must be modified, informed and unified by a 'predominant passion'[2] which is the emotion that in its abstract form he also disallows. Just as there are infinite beauties of different things, or let us say patterns, so the same external object, or in Kant's phrase representation, might in different contexts or different frames of mind be beautiful or ugly in many diverse ways. There must be allowed an infinite number of ways in which our faculties can harmoniously and freely interact, and the same external object might stimulate different interactions.[3] The universality, then, which is claimed by our aesthetic experience does not deny the rightness of a different aesthetic experience in face of the same external object, it only asserts the possibility and goodness of our own experience for every rational imagination.

In the above exposition I have endeavoured to accommodate my language as far as possible to Kant's in order to bring out the points of agreement between him and later theorists. But perhaps most of what is valuable in his demand for universality is better expressed in his general treatment of the aesthetic activity as a form of knowledge. The aesthetic activity is a becoming aware, not indeed of the nature of things, but of our own inner nature and processes, which are conditioned by things and which were before obscure to us. It is this lightening of our darkness which is in itself a harmony of our

[1] Cf. the end of this chapter.

[2] Coleridge, *Biog. Lit.* (edited by Shawcross), ii, p. 16.

[3] A different combination of the imagination with the understanding should result, for Kant, in the perception of a different form. But he must admit that men agree on the measurable facts of an arabesque while differing on its beauty. From his own point of view I do not clearly see what the understanding is doing here, considering his frequent insistence that 'in taste no concept is available for cognition'. We might have expected the free play to be that of the imagination alone or with sense. But as we do not adopt the psychology this can be left to Kantian students.

faculties, and which gives us a pleasure different from the pleasures of sense, because it is the first and always indispensable condition of spiritual activity.

9. There do seem moreover to be pleasures distinguishable but not separable from the aesthetic pleasure proper, which arise, in the case of art, from the fulfilment of our expectation that our expressions are communicable to others,[1] and in the case of nature from the adequacy, unpredictable though assured, of the forms of nature to express our emotions.[2] And just this possibility, often realized in the communication of beauty, that any spirit which is not my individual spirit should have an experience identical with mine, and that we should so far be one, and that this communion should be through the medium of 'material' things, is exactly the miracle that mystics and mystical theories of beauty are always endeavouring to articulate.

10. Whenever we for long think ourselves in agreement with the Critique of Judgement, we are sure to be brought up by the recollection that all this is only applied to the free beauty of Arabesque; that there are excluded from it in one direction all the beauty with which organic things are invested by nature or art,[3] in another all beauty of colour or tone, and in a third all that kind of beauty in great, powerful or terrible objects which is sometimes called sublime. The beauty of mankind, of animals and of buildings we are

[1] Cf. Cicero, *De Am.*, 88: 'Though a man should climb up into heaven, and behold universal nature and the beauty of the stars, yet if he had none to whom he could relate it, that would be to him but a tedious spectacle.' Cf. p. 62 *supra*.

[2] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. ii, p. 17: 'Now the mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness I call Aesthesis; but the exulting, grateful and reverent perception of it I call Theoria.' Cf. Wordsworth, *Letters*, vol. i, p. 14 (to D. Wordsworth, 1790): 'My whole soul was turned to him who produced the terrible majesty before me.' And on both points, cf. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, § 1: 'Under the Dionysiac spell, not only is there knit up again the bond between man and man; but nature, estranged, hostile or subjected, celebrates once more with her long-lost son, humanity, her feast of reconciliation.'

[3] Kant quotes flowers as free natural beauties (§§ 15, 16) on the ground that for them, as opposed to animals, we have no accurate concept of what the shape ought to be if it is to serve the purposes of the organism. But this to a great extent is the case also with animals. And of much inanimate nature even, e.g., the channel of a stream, or a hurricane, we can say whether it is a successful specimen of its kind. And that is all we can say of a pig.

told in § 16 presupposes a concept of purpose or perfection and is consequently not pure; and this ideal of perfection is empirical except in the case of man, where there is also one *a priori* and moral (§ 17). And in § 48 we read that in calling a woman beautiful we simply mean that nature represents in her form the purposes of a woman's form. Now this distinction between pure and adherent beauty simply does not exist. We do not know the purposes of nature in human forms, for, as Lotze[1] says, there is no more an ideal man than an ideal ellipse, the perfection of his organism residing not in the performance of a sum of functions but in an infinite capacity for development. And even if, as Kant appears to think, female beauty[2] were to be classed rather with that of animals and churches, yet we cannot say that in any of these beauty is proportionate to the fulfilment of purposes, unless among those purposes we include beauty. A painter once suggested, on my asking how our pleasure in Botticelli's 'Venus' could consist with her obvious want of equilibrium – presumably a defect in a female organism – that an important element in it was the suggestion of a sail just filling with the wind and lifting, not a boat, but a human body which was the sail itself, into delightful motion over the waters –

> *Like as the wind doth beautify a sail,*
> *And as a sail becomes the unseen wind.*[3]

Kant's notions of expression in art are lamentably prosaic. He seems always to be asking what the picture is 'of', what the poem is 'about', and, getting in reply words which express concepts, he argues that the beauty of the work consists in satisfying these, whereas every work of art and, to the eye of the artist, every natural object, creates the concept or standard by which, if by any, it must be judged.[4] An Audrey, a sheep and a meeting-house may be as obviously perfect in the performance of their functions as a Helen,

[1] *Geschichte der Aesthetik*, III. iv.

[2] Cf. *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*, iii, closely resembling Burke.

[3] *Edward III.* Cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. i. 132.

[4] Wordsworth, *Essay Supplementary to Preface* (1815), and quoting Coleridge, *Letter to Lady Beaumont* (1807).

an antelope and a St Mark's, and may equally induce in all men every devotion, affection or reverence except that which it is the property of beauty only to inspire. To invest them with this requires genius.

Many things which, though organic, do not satisfy a concept of perfection are beautiful; many which do are not; and we hope to maintain[1] that even the most formal beauty is expressive in the same way as a human body. And even if this severance – the total severance of formal from organic beauty – were justified, it seems to me an unjustifiable violence against language and common sense to arrogate the generic term beauty, or pure beauty, to the first, and treat the second as, from the aesthetic point of view, an adulteration or decline. It would be better to speak of the organic as beauty, or, with Hegel, as concrete beauty, and of the formal as abstract beauty. For if it be remembered that music, though not satisfying a concept, is excluded (§ 53, etc.) from pure beauty as being contaminated with sensuous charm and emotion, and that landscape, which Kant does not discuss, should consistently fall under the same ban, it will be obvious that no candid man would ever give as a typical instance of beauty any example from the class which has here usurped the name. Flowers, birds, sea-shells and arabesques, all in abstraction from their colour, are Kant's instances, and of these the first three are illegitimate (§ 16). He himself seems tending towards a more 'expressionist' theory in the admission that colours (§ 42), and tones (§ 53) – that is to say, mere sensations – can naturally symbolize states of mind. And he is so far inconsistent (§ 16) as to admit that *taste* gains by the combination of free with adherent beauty, though he quickly substitutes the statement that the combination of the beautiful with the good is a gain to 'our perceptive faculties on the whole'.

11. It is indeed obvious that by maintaining all beauty of living creatures to depend upon their adequacy to our conception of their purpose, Kant has committed himself to the doctrine that beauty in mankind is always the expression of morality (§ 17). He has defeated the adherents of the 'confused concept of perfection', only at the

[1] Chap. X.

cost of abandoning to them all the most fertile territory of beauty. But from his impregnable citadel of arabesque his successors have been able to revindicate their rightful dominion, though on an amended title. It is for the same reason that a wide and well-defined distinction had to be drawn between beauty and sublimity. The first, thus abstracted and impoverished, was patently unable to sustain the passion and exaltation which we connect with many 'presentations' unassignable to a concept; and so a different explanation had to be found. But the notion of sublimity is so important historically, both for its genesis and for its later development, that it will best be treated separately.[1]

12. Again, it is from the distinction between pure beauty and the beauty of things which satisfy our concept of their purpose that there follows Kant's separation of nature from art. For if a work of art is to be judged beautiful this must, he thinks, be always in accordance with a concept, as in the 'adherent beauty[2] of nature', though the genius which produces this work of art proceeds without any concept, rule or purpose.[3] So the artistic production of an arabesque, flower-painting or fugue differs from the artistic judgement on these products, and resembles the artistic judgements on actual flowers, sand-ripples or bird-song, by being founded on no concept. This is, I think, intolerable. The aesthetic experiences stimulated by natural and artificial sand-markings are certainly indistinguishable, and are I believe similar to that of the arabesque designer.[4] To discover the beauty of a new and strange poem is as little dependent on any concept, and as truly an original creation, as to write it. For the poet was stimulated by some interest or external experience to discover the beauty which is his poem, just as we are by reading his words, no

[1] Chap. IX.

[2] § 48. Kant here arbitrarily defines artistic beauty as 'a beautiful representation of a thing' which music, architecture, dancing, and embroidery certainly need not be (contrast § 16). From this and from what follows in the same paragraph it seems clear that the concept he demands is that of the actual class of things imitated, not of its perfection as in natural adherent beauty (cf. § 51); but this is both inconsistent and equally false. Cf. p. 76.

[3] §§ 46, 57.

[4] Cf. the criticism of Hegel's similar distinction (with an opposite preference) between art and nature, *infra*, p. 115.

less dull or repulsive to most men than the nature which stimulated him. Here, then, Kant has definitely separated the creative imagination from imaginative appreciation, which he identifies with the judgement of taste.[1] And in so doing, and in giving this last title to aesthetic experience he has sown for himself the seed of confusion which was to bear a harvest of unconceptual judgement, subjective universality, pleasure preceding and following the judgement, and purposiveness without purpose. In truth, when we *judge* (*urtheilen*) about beauty the aesthetic experience Contemplation, Play, Reflection, Appreciation (*Betrachtung*, *Spiel*, *Reflexion*, *Beurtheilung*) is over and we are critics. As Hegel[2] formulates it, in beauty the distinctions between particular and universal, concept and presentation, purpose and means, need no obliteration or reconcilement, for they have not yet made their appearance; there is no gulf to be bridged. There is no judgement, in the ordinary use of that word – which always implies existence – but an imaginative creation, a 'free play of our representative faculties';[3] a coming to the awareness, in an expressive unity, of something before obscure, manifold and troubling.[4] Such an activity may perhaps be described as pleasant, purposive and true. But its pleasure is unique; it is its own end and it refers to nothing but itself.

13. We shall, I believe, find our confidence in these criticisms upon Kant strengthened by the modifications, often unconscious or implicit, effected in the doctrine by Coleridge, a spirit with perhaps hardly less original gifts of speculation, but, for gain as well as for

[1] Cf. Wordsworth, *Essay Supplementary to Preface* (1815), where it is pointed out that 'Taste' is a degrading concept for poetry, 'because without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the reader, there can be no adequate sympathy'.

[2] *Aesthetik*, Einleitung.

[3] Tumarkin (*Kant-Studien*, xi. 348), *Zur Transcendentalen Methode der Kantischen Aesthetik*, emphasizes, like Schiller, the '*freies Spiel*', '*blosse Betrachtung*' [Free play, mere Contemplation] as Kant's genuine intuition of the aesthetic experience; regarding his 'judgement of the universal communicability of our pleasure' as an irrelevancy introduced in the interests of his system. The pleasure ('*an einem eigenartigen Erkenntnisvorgang*') is a necessary, and the critical judgement a possible result, but neither is of the essence of the activity. The further identification of this '*blosse Beurtheilung*' with '*ästhetische Introjektion*' and '*Einfühlung*' seems, however tempting, to be not justifiably attributable to Kant.

[4] Cf. p. 74.

loss, less systematic, and possessed with creative as well as reflective genius. Beauty is 'the subjection of matter to spirit so as to be transformed into a symbol, in and through which the spirit reveals itself'.[1] There is not one beauty of every flower, which the artist must see and copy or lose all; there are beauties awaiting him in all as infinite as the passions of his own heart, only he must

*see them feel,*
*Or link them to some feeling.*[2]

For if 'in nature there is nothing melancholy'[3] neither is there anything glad; in us lives

*the spirit and the power*
*Which, wedding nature to us, gives in dower*
*A new Earth and new Heaven.*

What the poet experienced and here describes[4] is not the beauty of an arabesque, yet it is in the strictest sense beautiful; it is without concepts but not without emotion; I do not know if it is art or nature; all the 'sensuous charms' of sunset colour, all the conceptual thinking of Kant's own philosophy, all the moral struggle of Coleridge's own life, are melted down to make the affection which becomes expressed to the poet by a 'peculiar tint of yellow green'. For

*We receive but what we give*
*And in our life alone does nature live:*
*Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!*
*And would we aught behold of higher worth,*
*Than that inanimate cold world allowed*
*To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,*
*Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,*
*A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud*
*Enveloping the Earth –*

[1] 'On the Principles of Genial Criticism', Shawcross edition, *Biographia Literaria*, ii, p. 239. The germs of this larger interpretation may be found in Kant, § 22, *Allgemein. Anmerk*, and § 49, where he insists on the freedom of the creative imagination from the laws of association.

[2] Wordsworth, 'Prelude', iii. 130.

[3] Coleridge, 'The Nightingale'.

[4] Coleridge, 'Dejection'.

*And from the soul itself must there be sent*
*A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,*
*Of all sweet sounds the life and element.*

If this be the pathetic fallacy it is an idol of the tribe.[1]

[1] Bacon, *Nov. Org.*, xli: 'Idola tribus sunt fundata in ipsa natura humana . . . omnes perceptiones, tam sensus quam mentis, sunt ex analogia hominis, non ex analogia universi.'

Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Part iv, chap. xii.

*Note.* Any understanding I have reached of this Kantian treatise is due to the weekly discussions held, for three terms with H. W. B. Joseph and myself, by Professor Cook-Wilson.

CHAPTER VI

# Emotionalist Theories: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche

1. For Schopenhauer beauty belongs to everything purely contemplated. 2. The World as Will. 3. The escape from the will by beauty. 4. The aesthetic consciousness often accepts this theory while rejecting the pessimistic basis, which is indeed inconsistent with its truth. 5. Schopenhauer's 'Ideas'. 6. Distinction of musical from other beauty on the ground of its unrepresentative character. 7. But other kinds of beauty share this character. 8. Nietzsche makes the distinction one between two methods of art: one formal, sublime, passionate; the other representative, pretty, intellectual. 9. Neither can really exist alone without ceasing to attain beauty. 10. Grounds for connecting formal beauty with sublime passion.

1. The *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* is not likely to be read by many who are not students of philosophy, and even among them it is the least known of Kant's great works. Hardly any considerable philosopher is so popularly accessible as Schopenhauer, who is indeed in the hands, if not in the head, of every superior novelist's heroine. And nothing in Schopenhauer is so attractive or so valuable as his discussion of beauty.[1] But both doctrines are complicated and distorted by their attachment to systems[2] already elaborated on other grounds; for system, which is rightly the philosopher's aim, is apt to become also one of his premisses.

[1] *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii, and *Supplement*, iii (trans. Kemp and Haldane). The valuable essence of Schopenhauer's aesthetic is developed in an essay on 'The Philosophy of Art', by Professor W. P. Ker, in *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* (Seth and Haldane).

[2] Kant *Brief an Reinhold*, 18.12, 1787.

Starting from Kant, Schopenhauer, with an artistic nature probably both more impressionable and more cultivated, is forced to recognize that there are not certain beautiful things beautiful each in its own certain way, but that everything in the world is capable of being found beautiful, perhaps in many different ways, if only we have the necessary genius.[1]

Beauty then, like love, is bestowed by us, and by perfect genius would be withheld from nothing. Further, also perhaps as a result of his more artistic and less scientific temperament, Schopenhauer feels the aesthetic experience to be not so much a free gift and uncovenanted glory as a release and a forgetting, a brief enfranchisement from the Danaid task of knowledge and the Sisyphean struggle with desire. We are eased of the heavy and the weary weight of a world not only unintelligible but impracticable; and the bliss which cradles us in its divinely tranquil arms is the bliss not of passion but of a lifted yoke and riven fetters.

2. Nothing less than the lurid mythology of Schopenhauer was necessary to give their proper value to the sober lights of this paradise. The cause and essence of the world is a blind force or tendency not of matter nor of consciousness but prior to both, which Schopenhauer romantically personifies as The Will or The Will to Live. This succeeds in becoming or bringing into being the material, vegetable and animal worlds as successive grades of self-objectification. Last of all it made man also and, in him first becoming fully conscious, knows as ideas what, as will, it has all along been. The argument is that for whatever exists there must have pre-existed a tendency, and so before everything whatever there must have pre-existed a tendency by itself; and though Schopenhauer would not explicitly allow the process to be temporal, since time is only a form of man's thinking, little but a decent obscurity is gained by calling the priority logical. Now all existence appears to consist in strife; organic life, at least, is one insatiable and ravenous desire whose pain is obliterated and whose cruelty is stayed only by the intolerable

[1] This is undoubtedly his general view. An apparently inconsistent remark in § 45 means only, I believe, that those objects which 'most adequately objectify the will at any stage' are easiest to see as beautiful. Cf. § 41.

panic of fear. The creature that is not fleeing is pursuing; feeding its own pain on another's, or with a not less fatal lust, providing, through the pains of labour, new victims for the cosmic curse. And man savours this cup most bitterly, for he is the eye by which the universe beholds itself and knows itself infernal. Even his science is a painful service of the Will; it is the infinite weaving of relations which start always with a relation to our own desire. But just as for optimistic systems[1] if God did not contain the devil within himself he would not be very God but only an abstract and empty dream, not fully good because with no evil to conquer, so conversely for pessimism, the world as will would not be evil if man were not good enough to see its badness in idea. He is even able to conquer it. In the denial of the will to live – the asceticism of Christianity and Buddhism – the will at its highest development turns victoriously upon itself, and attains, according to Schopenhauer, annihilation; though we might with at least equal plausibility conjecture that this is but its last and subtlest device, by feigning suicide, to objectify itself no longer as man but as God.[2] For since visible evil was our only reason for calling the Will bad, the seeds of this supremely atoning renunciation justify us no less in believing it good. But we are not concerned with the elaboration and criticism of this system, the only one perhaps ever developed at once so unthinkable, unpicturable and undesirable.

3. What interests us rather is an inconsistency which, for the theory as a whole, has much less importance. We, though we are nothing but the will, can free ourselves from its slavery in aesthetic contemplation. 'If ceasing to consider the when, why and whither of things we concentrate ourselves on the what; not allowing abstract thought with its concepts to possess our consciousness, but sinking ourselves wholly in perception of the object; then we escape our individuality and will, and continue to exist only as the pure mirror of the object, with which we become identified; so that what is known is no longer the particular thing, but the idea, and the knower is no longer an individual but the pure knowing sub-

[1] Cf. Croce. *Logica*, p. 69.

[2] Actual suicide for Schopenhauer is not annihilation of the will but yielding to it.

ject.' 'But this disposition is facilitated by the attractiveness of natural objects for our contemplation.' 'While science follows the stream of reason and consequence, and with each attainment sees further, and never attains a satisfying goal, art is always at its goal.' 'Imagination is useful in enlarging and improving the sphere of perception, but may be used for the selfish pleasure of castle-building.' 'The common man does not linger in mere perception; he seeks a concept as a lazy man does a chair, and assigns to it the perception, which interests him no more. To him knowledge is a lamp to lighten his path, to the man of genius it is a sun to lighten the world.'

'The possessor of will is constantly tortured by the insatiability of Tantalus. When we lift ourselves out of the stream of willing, the peace vainly sought on the path of desire comes to us of its own accord and we are well. The divine *ἀταραξία*[1] is ours. It is this blessedness which casts an enchanting glamour over the past or distant, even our own past, for by these the will is less stimulated.'

It depends upon the object contemplated which of two correlative elements in the process should be predominant: the emancipation of the idea from particularity, or that of the knower from his individuality.[2]

'So long as we are attracted by the fitness of the object for contemplation, that is to say, when its manifold yet distinct form clearly represents its idea, the object which affects us is beautiful; but if, in spite of this attractiveness, it has a hostile relation to our will, from which we must forcibly detach ourselves in order to give ourselves up to pure knowledge, then the object is called sublime, since by it we are raised above ourselves into a joyful contemplation of what by its immensity, solitude or terror is in utmost opposition

[1] Peace.

[2] Schopenhauer is at pains to distinguish his Idea from the concept. The latter is abstract, discursive, communicable by words and exhausted by definition. The Idea is the reverse of all this and is perceptible; § 45 and *Suppl.*, xxxiv. It seems unnecessary here to discuss the fantastic identification of the aesthetic ideas with the Ideas of Plato and Kant's Thing-in-itself. My inverted commas here merely indicate a freely translated anthology from the text, which may be thus easily distinguished from comment.

to our desire.' Yet this violent revolt is clearly an effort of will;[1] and if, as Schopenhauer says, sublimity is proportionate to the difficulty of regarding any given object without relating it to our will, that might be most sublime to genius which is richest in sensual allurement.[2]

Of both sublimity and beauty there are degrees depending on the grade of objectification of the will to which the object belongs. Thus a man may be more sublime – as in a tragedy – or more beautiful, than an animal or rock can be. The higher grades, where they are not sublime, tend to emphasize the freedom of the idea from particularity; the lower, that of the observer from his individual will. In the lower grades of beauty and in all sublimity the satisfaction is less positive, more one of mere relief.

4. Before discussing the interesting details and developments of this system, we may consider it in general. We can accept gratefully the healing of the rift between art and nature, the doctrine that beauty is a gift of the spirit for which all things are possible objects, and the recognition of an activity distinct from will, as from science, yet having for its object will. Here plainly much is in profound agreement with the artistic consciousness; there is an advance in insight beyond previous writers, welcome to all who have reflected on the aesthetic consciousness. Stevenson in his essay on *Walking Tours* seems to sum up the theory even better than its author had done: 'We fall in love, we drink hard, we run to and fro upon the earth like frightened sheep. And now you are to ask yourself if, when all is done, you would not have been better to sit by the fire at home, and be happy thinking. To sit still and contemplate – to remember the faces of women without desire, to be pleased by the great deeds of men without envy, to be everything and everywhere in sympathy and yet content to remain where and what you are – is not this to know both wisdom and virtue, and to dwell with happiness?' [3] Stevenson may have been consciously influenced by

[1] Or if, as Schopenhauer evidently intends (*Suppl.*, xxx), it is not, then there is some other principle at work in the world besides the Will.

[2] Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 251, 254.

[3] *Virginibus Puerisque*, p. 260.

Schopenhauer, but that, of course, cannot be said of the hardly less striking resemblances of Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, where the poet attributes to 'beauteous forms' –

> *that blessed mood,*
> *In which the burthen of the mystery,*
> *In which the heavy and the weary weight*
> *Of all this unintelligible world,*
> *Is lightened: that serene and blessed mood,*
> *In which the affections gently lead us on –*
> *Until, the breath of this corporeal frame*
> *And even the motion of our human blood*
> *Almost suspended, we are laid asleep*
> *In body, and become a living soul:*
> *While with an eye made quiet by the power*
> *Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,*
> *We see into the life of things.*[1]

[1] It is not necessary to multiply examples of the feeling, almost universal among artists, that beauty, by a genuine *katharsis*, liberates a man from his passions, from his troubles, and from his perplexities. Schopenhauer quotes aptly from Goethe. A striking instance from a simpler period is offered by *Aucassin et Nicolette*:

> *Nus homme n'est si esbahis,*
> *Tant dolans ni entrepris,*
> *De grand mal amaladis*
> *S'il l'oit ne soit garis*
> *Et de joie resbaudis*
> *Tant par est douce.*

A crude attempt to explain this feeling is early found in the '*suave mari magno*' theory of tragedy, to which indeed Kant's Dynamical Sublime and Schopenhauer's contemplation of the Will, in spite of their new setting, betray a relation.

> ἄνθρωπός ἐστι ζῷον ἐπίπονον φύσει
> καὶ πολλὰ λυπήρ' ὁ βίος ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρει.
> παραψυχὰς οὖν φροντίδων ἀνεύρετο
> ταύτας 'ὁ γὰρ νοῦς τῶν ἰδίων λήθην λαβών
> πρὸς ἀλλοτρίῳ τε ψυχαγωγηθεὶς πάθει,
> μεθ' ἡδονῆς ἀπῆλθε παιδευθεὶς ἅμα.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> ἅπαντα γὰρ τὰ μείζον' ἢ πέπονθέ τις
> ἀτυχήματ' ἄλλοις γεγονότ' ἐννοούμενος
> τὰς αὑτὸς αὑτοῦ συμφορὰς ἧττον στένει.

Timocles. Meineke, *Com. Fragg.*, p. 800. [Man is born a beast of burden and his life brings many sorrows, so he has found out this solace for his own cares; forgetting

The almost pathological states of absorption in beautiful objects which Wordsworth sometimes experienced, and to which he here seems to allude, would have delighted Schopenhauer, not least for their affinity with the trances of the Oriental mystic. But there is a tone in this passage, essentially Wordsworthian, struck most distinctly in the words 'affections' and 'joy', which the pessimist would not have understood, and which may suggest our first criticism upon his theory. In spite of the evil and suffering which weigh upon him the poet has a faith –

> *that Nature never did betray*
> *The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,*
> *Through all the years of this our life, to lead*
> *From joy to joy: for she can so inform*
> *The mind that is within us, so impress*
> *With quietness and beauty, and so feed*
> *With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,*
> *Rash judgements, nor the sneers of selfish men,*
> *Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all*
> *The dreary intercourse of daily life,*
> *Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb*
> *Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold*
> *Is full of blessings.*[1]

It may be said that this trust is exceptional; but I believe that in cases of *exceptional* sensibility to nature it is rather the rule; while the combination, as in Leopardi, of sensitiveness to the world's beauty and repulsion from the facts of life, seems a somewhat morbid inconsistency. In any case there is nothing plausible in Schopenhauer's contention that we exult to be free from the intolerable cruelty of the Will only that we may luxuriate in the spectacle of its sinister goings-

---

them and fascinated by those of others, he goes a happier and a wiser man. He less bemoans his own mishaps by dwelling on the disasters of others.] Cf. Burke, *On the Sublime*. This is finally developed into the conception of *ars consolatrix* or the justification of the world as an aesthetic object. Cf. the quotation from Beethoven, p. 92. The lines about enjoying a shipwreck from dry land are in Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, ii. 1. The aesthetic experience is the anaesthetic of passion. It tranquillizes.

[1] *Tintern Abbey.*

on. For him the world, which in art we love, is only another manifestation of that miserable and evil principle which is also objectified in our own desires and indeed in our contemplation; as other minds have been tempted to occupy their empty Nirvanas with contemplation of those very torments which their blessedness consists in escaping. Schopenhauer is right, and is supported by other thinkers from Kant to Croce, in holding that for aesthetic appreciation it is necessary to be free both from desire for the object or its results, and also from abstract thinking. We must indeed be purely contemplative, interested in something for its own sake – for its proper character or quality. And it is a profound and new suggestion that the object of this contemplative activity is the will – 'emotion recollected in tranquillity' – for by a brilliant afterthought[1] Schopenhauer reminds us that the shows of things could never reveal to us their inward nature, were it not that within us too that same will is active, and that we have first become aware in our own feeling of that which we afterwards aesthetically divine in them.[2] But the implications of this triumph in the objectification of our own will are the opposite of what Schopenhauer supposes. If to contemplate it, or the world which objectifies it, apart from subjective desire, be to love it, that must be because, apart from our individual gratification, it is lovable. The world, though it does not satisfy all our cravings, is good, not demonstrably for the understanding, but to the impartial intuition.[3]

5. A not less obvious objection, and one touching rather Schopenhauer's Aesthetic itself than its affiliation to his cosmology, is concerned with his doctrine that the object of artistic contemplation is

[1] § 45 and *Suppl.*, ch. xxix; cf. Lipps' conception of 'Einfühlung'. See below, Chap. XI.

[2] Cf. Croce and Plotinus, *Enn.*, v. viii. 2: *ὥσπερ ἄν εἴ τις τὸ εἴδωλον αὑτοῦ βλέπων, ἀγνοῶν ὅθεν ἥκει ἐκεῖνο διώκοι.* [As if one seeing his own reflection and knowing not whence it came should pursue it.]

[3] Cf. Wordsworth as quoted on p. 27. Schopenhauer's own account of tragedy (*Suppl.*, xxxvii) and of Christian painting (§ 48) approximates to what is here suggested, for in them he finds represented an activity, namely, the renunciation and conquest of the will to live, which is in itself valuable and worthy of our love. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* [*The Birth of Tragedy*], *Versuch einer Selbstkritik*, § 4, points out that the joy of life often accompanies art.

not the individual but the Ideas – that is, the characteristics of the species. This is directly at variance with the usual and true belief that it is just the individual with which art peculiarly deals. The criticism is valid. But the error is, I think, rather an example of Schopenhauer's fantastic misuse of terms than a fault vitiating his system. It seems clear that by speaking of the artistic observer as an 'unindividualized knower' no more is meant than that he contemplates impersonally or impartially – that is, that he just contemplates without the distraction of practical ends.[1] The will, which so often causes us to err, is not now active; for it has been overcome by the pure intuition which has made it the object of contemplation. And the intention of his complementary paradox that the beautiful object is no individual but an Idea is, I think, hardly less certain. He means that not only does our intuition of it involve, as Kant saw, no concept, but also[2] is no judgement and so involves no predication of existence; 'the thing perceived and the percipient are undistinguished'. This Kant failed to see, or but half saw, when he insisted that the judgement of taste produces a pleasure free from all *interest in the existence of the object*,[3] and that it gives us no logical knowledge of things.[4] Hegel expresses it by saying that art deals only with appearance,[5] and Croce[6] by pointing out that in aesthetic experience we need not distinguish between perception and imagination. But to deny that the object of aesthetic intuition is individual, because it is not necessarily an external or 'real' thing, is a misuse of terms which leads Schopenhauer to a curious oversight. Had he clearly seen that he meant no more than this in refusing to call the beautiful thing individual, he might have allowed that title to what is perceived – the subject of any historical judgement. But his obsession with the Will leads him to say that all

[1] Cf. Kant, *K. d. U.*, § 2. This causes Kant also to speak of the 'aesthetic judgement' as 'universal'.

[2] iii, §§ 34, 36: 'We may therefore accurately define art as the way of regarding things apart from the principle of sufficient reason, in opposition to . . . the way of experience and of science.'

[3] *K. d. U.*, §§ 2, 6.

[4] Ibid., § 1.

[5] *Aesthetik*, Einleitung.

[6] Cf. Croce, *Estetica*, i (in the aesthetic experience), 'we do not oppose ourselves as empirical beings to external reality, but simply objectify our impressions'.

ordinary perception, like scientific knowledge, is merely of relations – that is to say, it is nothing but a general concept; so that, aesthetic contemplation having been ruled out, there remains no method at all for knowing the individual. It can at most be the object of blind and immediate desire – hypothetical, because never known.[1] There is every mark of conscious confusion in his admission[2] that in human beauty and its artistic treatment we must distinguish the character of the individual from this character of the species, 'so that a certain extent each man expresses an Idea peculiar to himself'. This leads him back into all the old compromises between 'beauty' and 'expressiveness'.[3]

6. It is necessary lastly to consider the important distinction drawn by Schopenhauer between music and all other forms of beauty, which has been developed by Nietzsche into the basis of his own theory, just as Kant's distinction between beauty and sublimity had been adopted by Schopenhauer himself. We shall find here one of those attempts, recurring in almost all aesthetic theories, to make some essential division which may fall within the unity of beauty, but may be more capable of rigorous maintenance than the empirical distinction of the different arts. Kant separates Beauty from Sublimity, and also Formal from Expressive Beauty; Schopenhauer, Music, as the direct expression of the Will, from Art, as expressing the Ideas; Nietzsche, Dionysiac or Tragic Art from Apolline or Plastic; Hegel distinguishes Symbolic, Classical and Romantic; Schiller endeavours to satisfy the same impulse in several directions.

The problem from which Schopenhauer starts is that while Music must, on the analogy of the other arts, be related to the world as the representation of the thing represented, it is hard to see how music can represent. His solution is that, whereas the other arts represent the Ideas, or species of reality in which the Will has objectified itself, music passes over this intermediate stage and manifests or expresses the nature of the Will as directly as do the Ideas themselves. Thus

[1] iii, § 33. In *Suppl.*, xxxviii, on the other hand, he allows that history deals with the individual or particular.

[2] § 45.

[3] Cf. Chap. X, especially p. 179, note 2, and also p. 57, note 3.

music shows us not this or that mode of being, this or that joy or sorrow, but the nature of all joy and sorrow, of all being. Yet it is not abstract. 'Whoever gives himself up entirely to the impression of a symphony, seems to see all the possible events of life and the world take place in himself; yet if he reflects, he can find no likeness between the music and the things that passed before his mind.'[1] This seems to be an account of a common experience.[2] Music, mple or complex according to our capacities and culture, gives most of us a sense of profound insight into ourselves and into the world, and has an assured impressiveness to some extent sacrificed by the greater definiteness of poetry and the plastic arts. We often think of Browning as essentially a dramatic or mimetic poet, but it was of music he said:[3]

*had I painted the whole,*
*Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonderworth:*
*Had I written the same, made verse – still, effect proceeds from cause,*
*Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;*
*It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,*
*Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled:*

*But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,*
*Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!*
*And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,*
*That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound but a star.*[4]

Browning again may have been influenced by Schopenhauer. If so, it is one more instance of the ease with which the fruitful seed of his aesthetic doctrine is winnowed by the artist's insight from its pessimistic husk. Independent evidence may once more be found in Wordsworth, who, intimate and favoured lover as he was of the visible world, was never more deeply moved than by the beauty of

[1] § 52.

[2] Cf. Beethoven: 'Wem sich meine Musik verständlich macht, der ist über allen Jammer der Welt erhaben.' [The man who comprehends my music is elevated above all the world's turmoil.]

[3] *Abt Vogler.*

[4] Cf. F. Howes, *Man, Mind and Music*, 1948, p. 54.

a melody whose theme he could not tell, but which made clear to his heart something equally persisting in –

*Old, unhappy, far-off things*
*And battles long ago.*

and in –

*Natural sorrow, loss, or pain*
*That has been, and may be again.*[1]

Schopenhauer quotes Aristotle as already aware of this distinction in the *Poetics*[2] and in the question why only music, not colour or smell, resembles character; and compares Plato's[3] view that music is the most direct expression of human temperament.[4]

7. Schopenhauer's point seemed to be that, though he was pledged to the theory that beauty is the quality of the world wherever we contemplate it, he could not see how in music we can be said to contemplate the world. No form of aesthetic experience is more moving than the musician's, but Schopenhauer had too true a taste to allow even his theories to persuade him that in it we imitate the Ideas – that is to say, specific objectifications of the Will, or, in plain language, kinds of things and actions. The preliminary objection to his distinction is that nature and other forms of art besides music are not imitative; and one of these, architecture, he has explained by his usual formula: it exhibits the objectification of the Will at the low grade of material attraction and resistance. And it could only have been because music seemed immeasurably more exciting and touching that an analogous explanation of this, as

[1] *The Solitary Reaper.*

[2] *Poetics*, iv. *αἰτίαι δύο τινὲς . . . τὸ μιμεῖσθαι . . . ὁ ῥυθμὸς. Probl.*, 920*a*, 2. *διὰ τί οἱ ῥυθμοὶ καὶ τὰ μέλη, φωνὴ οὖσα, ἤθεσιν ἔοικεν*; See p. 192 *infra*. Cf. *Probl.*, 920*b*, 29, as justifying this interpretation, which is Butcher's, against Bywater's. [There are two sources of poetry . . . imitation and rhythm. Why do rhythm and harmony, which are sounds, resemble disposition?]

[3] *Laws*, vii, 700, 701, 798*d*, 889.

[4] To which we may append further instances: Plato, *Laws*, 655; *Rep.*, 401*d*, 402*c*; Aristotle, *Pol.*, 1340*a*, 7; cf. Hegel's account of the more 'inward' and directly emotional nature of music (*Aesthetik*, iii, pp. 144, 146, and especially pp. 150, 151) as dependent upon the temporal, non-spatial character in which it resembles mental life. This is to some extent shared by poetry.

presenting the rudimentary components of all life and movement in vibration and pulsation, was overlooked. For of such a possibility Schopenhauer says nothing, though he explicitly rejects the quaint metamorphosis of music into an 'audible arithmetic'. Yet the familiar trope of 'frozen music', in spite of an implied coldness, might have suggested the question whether the dim splendour of Byzantine domes or the vast and ordered intricacy of a Gothic minster be not, by its profound yet unspeakable emotion, allied on the one side to the quality of a symphony and on the other to that of forest gloom or mountain immensity. Or if this comparison be rejected,[1] the consideration of dancing, so intimately connected with music at its earlier stages in the excitement and alleviation, through expression, of the most intense emotion, might have served to bridge the gulf. The error of supposing that beauty arises in the contemplation of Ideas – which for all his efforts really remain abstract concepts – led Schopenhauer to suppose that what is in truth the nature of all beauty was peculiar to music. Architecture too expresses directly the movements of the Will, that is to say, human feelings, and not the feigned tensions of physics.[2] Something like what he says of music is also true of a sunset: in it we may seem to see all the passions of life, though it is the likeness of none of them. But it is with the arts that he always contrasts music, forgetting that for him, as for us, their beauty is of the same kind as nature's. If he cannot find the Ideas in music, neither should he in the song of birds nor in the sound of wind and waters, to which music surely bears somewhat the same relation as does architecture to the forest

[1] Schopenhauer might have been influenced to accept it by the fact that Hegel from one point of view sets architectural and musical beauty at opposites, on the ground that the first is limited to indicating an emotional content from outside ('auf das Seelenvolle nur als auf ein anderes hinzuweisen', *Aesthetik*, Eintheilung, i, p. 107), while in the second content and form are, as feeling and tone, mutually adequate and interpenetrated. I cannot support this contrast from my own experience.

[2] Cf. Reynolds, *Discourses*, xiii: 'As we have naturally a veneration for antiquity, whatever building brings to our remembrance ancient customs and manners, . . . is sure to give this delight . . . Gothic architecture, . . . though not so ancient as the Grecian, is more so to our imagination, with which the artist is more concerned than with absolute truth. . . . As buildings depart from regularity they now and then acquire something of scenery by this accident, which . . . might not unsuccessfully be adopted by an architect in an original plan.'

or the Alpine spire. Imitation is essential to no beauty, but emotion to all.

8. All this has been partly seen by Nietzsche, who in subsuming Schopenhauer's distinction under his more general one between Dionysiac and Apolline art really blurts its clearness in proportion as he accommodates it to fact. Music may be of either kind; but so may verbal, facial or bodily expressions, and therefore so also, though this he does not add, may the arts of poetry, painting and sculpture.[1]

This development, though not foreseen by Schopenhauer, is, I think, logical. Nietzsche also has confused two distinctions:[2] one between formal and representative *art* – the art of music, for instance, and that of sculpture or epic poetry – and another between the deeper experience of sublime or religious ecstasy and the enjoyment of that picturesque, embroidering beauty which turns everything, even the harshness[3] of life and death, into favour and prettiness.

Apolline[4] art is for him the art of the dreamer never convinced of

[1] 'Jetzt soll sich das Wesen der Natur symbolisch ausdrücken; eine neue Welt der Symbole ist nöthig, einmal die ganze leibliche Symbolik, nicht nur die Symbolik des Mundes, des Gesichts, des Wortes, sondern die volle, alle Glieder rhythmisch bewegende Tanzgebärde. Sodann wachsen die anderen symbolischen Kräfte, die der Musik, in Rhythmik, Dynamik, and Harmonie, plötzlich ungestüm' (*Die Geburt der Tragödie*, § 2). [Here must the essence of Nature express itself in symbols. A whole new world of symbols is needed, not only that of lips, features, words, but all the rhythmic, exciting action of the dance. Hence develop the other powers of symbolism in music, rhythm, stress, and harmony.]

[2] Cf. the Aristotelian distinction of the μανικός and εὐφυής as ἐκστατικός and εὔπλαστος. *Poetics*, xvii. 1455*a*, 33. [The inspired or possessed and the sensitive man of talent.]

[3] § 1.

[4] The distinction is least obscurely summarized in § 16: 'In opposition to all those who have industriously derived the arts from a single principle . . . I behold Apollo as the glorifying genius of the principle of individuality, through whom alone deliverance in illusion can really be attained; while at the mystical and ecstatic cry of Dionysus, the ban of individuality is burst, and the way lies open to the wombs of the world, to the innermost core of things. . . . Music must be judged by principles quite different from those of all the arts of form, and in a word not by the category of Beauty.' Cf. Nietzsche's notes on the book, given by his sister in the Introduction to Dr Levy's translation: 'A book consisting of mere experiences relating to pleasurable and unpleasurable aesthetic states. . . . The word "Apollonian" stands for that state of rapt repose in the presence of a visionary world, in the presence of the world of *beautiful appearance* designed as a deliverance from *becoming*: the word "Dionysus", on the other

the reality, though bewitched by the charm, of his dream. The beauty such a dreamer sees is that of phenomena, the illusory appearance of individuals distinct from each other and himself; and by this he is reconciled[1] to what is in truth the appalling irrationality of human life and action. In the Dionysiac state of mind, on the other hand, the veil of appearance[2] is rent, and man sees into the eternal oneness which underlies birth and death, desire and destruction. The resources of rhetorical genius are exhausted in the forced contradictions which are intended to describe this condition. It is at once shuddering and triumphant, ghastly and ecstatic, rapturous and loathsome. It is the barbaric licence against which the 'centripetal' Dorians alone could make a stand. It is occasioned by narcotic drugs and by the approach of spring. It vents itself, for of expression it is incapable, in shrieks and in Buddhistic apathy, in leaping, in cymbals and in suicide. Its nihilistic yet seductive fury necessitates the Apolline antidote,[3] as the only salvation for mankind, and the union of the two in tragedy, conceived in Dionysiac debauch, and consummated in a Sophoclean calm begot from the very whirlwind of passion, is the flower of art, the ultimate reconciliation of religion, the justification of the world.[4]

Such a contrast Comus draws between two kinds of music – the song of the Lady and that of the Sirens –

---

hand, stands for strenuous "becoming", grown self-conscious, in the form of the rampant voluptuousness of the creator, who is also perfectly conscious of the violent anger of the destroyer' (p. xxv).

[1] I do not know why.

[2] Yet in § 19 we hear of the 'Eternal truth of Apolline art'.

[3] Cf. Pater, *Plato and Platonism*, x; Professor G. Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*, especially pp. 10 and 252.

[4] §§ 16, 21. 'The Hero, the highest phenomenon of the will, is rejected, to our pleasure, because he is still only phenomenon, and the eternal life of the will remains unaffected, by his annihilation. "We believe in eternal life", says tragedy, while music is the immediate idea of that life. Quite other is the end of the plastic artist. There Apollo overcomes the suffering of the individual by the luminous celebration of the eternity of the phenomenon, there beauty triumphs over the inherent suffering of life, and pain is in a sense dissimulated from nature's lineaments.' 'In a sense our sympathy redeems us from the eternal pathos of the world.' 'Dionysus speaks with the tongue of Apollo, but Apollo finally with that of Dionysus, whereby the highest aim of tragedy and all art is achieved.'

*Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,*
*Who as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,*
*And lap it in Elysium: . . .*
*Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,*
*And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself.*
*But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,*
*Such sober certainty of waking bliss*
*I never felt till now.*

9. Here, then, we have the conscious attempt to identify a distinction between representative and formal art with another, between 'mere beauty' and the 'sublimity' which compels a negative stage of repulsion, as well as a positive one of rapture, before the overwhelming size or strength of a suggested absolute whole.[1] But, so far as there is any distinction it really lies between two elements present in every instance of beauty but only separable by abstraction. Nietzsche's analysis announces the presence of two components: the one, pure expression, pure form, pure spiritual mastery; the other, pure matter, blind passion, inexpressive, indeterminate and equally, therefore, horrid or divine. But both of these are, for beauty at least, limiting conceptions. The moment that either ideal were attained in separation beauty would cease to be. Tragedy[2] and Lyric[3] are confessedly compounds of the two. As approximating to pure form[4] Nietzsche instances somewhat garbled ideals, derived from

[1] Cf. Lotze, *Outlines of Aesthetics*, § 21: 'sublime . . . the inexhaustible procession of individual from the universal.' The influence of Kant's 'Sublime' on Nietzsche was probably through Schiller, whose *Ueber das Erhabene* has noticeable affinities to him; cf. Chap. IX.

[2] § 8.

[3] § 5. A good example in brief of Nietzsche's difficulties.

[4] The confusion of the whole distinction is increased by the fact that for the unrepresentative Dionysiac beauty of music, rhythm, etc. (Kant's *pulchritudo vaga*), we must use the term 'formal' beauty, which yet, on account of its approximation by Nietzsche to inarticulate passion, becomes the 'material' element in all beauty. Apolline or representative beauty (*pulchritudo adhaerens*) is the element of expression or form, which, superadded to the other, produces beauty. 'The Dionysiac and musical bewitchment of the dreamer sparkles forth on every side with pictures – lyrical poems, which in their highest development are called tragedies and dramatic dithyrambs' (§ 5). The way in which these two distinguishable elements are inseparably combined in

Winckelmann, of sculpture and epic poetry regarded as mere visions which the artist beholds but with which he never identifies himself.[1] This world of Fancy as opposed to Imagination,[2] which in its purity would be not beauty at all, but only the frigid inventions of rhetoric, the prettification of prosaic life, he identifies with 'beauty' or Apolline art, and thus easily vindicates the claim of music and all genuine beauty to the higher title of Dionysiac. The truth is that for any expression there must be presupposed a blind affection, which we can only figure to ourselves as an appalling nightmare, or intoxicating delirium, of incoherence; but its expression, which without it would be the impossible expression of nothing, is the essential joy of spiritual life, vision and creation.[3] What had to be expressed we know only in its expression, and therein we know nothing else. It may turn out to be an emotion towards an absolute creative force, or our individual love and terror; both, if really expressed, are alike

---

every work of art to a unique individuality is well illustrated by Professor de Sélincourt (*Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser – Introduction*) in the case of –

> '*Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven*
> *With the moon's beauty, and the moon's soft pace.*

'To him the significance of the situations that he describes and his attitude with regard to them were more than the situations themselves; the music in which his imagination phrased them was a part of their significance. . . . Spenser is never outside his subject, delighting in a spectacle of movement or of passion, allowing to his creation the irresponsible freedom of actual life, and curbed only by life's capricious laws. All that he creates is alike moulded and controlled by his personal emotions, and is deeply charged with his own reflection. The world of reality was profoundly dissatisfying to him.'

[1] § 12.

[2] Cf. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, xv: 'The sense of musical delight, with the power of producing it, is a gift of the Imagination' . . . 'images however beautiful . . . become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion, or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity.'

[3] Cf. Schiller, *Briefe über Aesthetische Erziehung*, 15: 'So long as we merely think of the form, it is merely abstract and lifeless; so long as we merely feel the life there, it is mere formless sensation. Only so far as the form lives in our feelings, and the life takes form in our intelligence, is there a living form. And this is always the case when we judge the object beautiful. . . . Beauty consequently, as the consummation of humanity, can be exclusively neither mere life, as has been maintained by acute observers who confined themselves too closely to the evidence of experience, . . . nor mere form, as it has been pronounced by speculative sages and philosophising artists: . . . it is the common object of both impulses.'

art and beauty, and, in the aesthetic sense, true. For Nietzsche himself allows that individuality and the 'veil of Maya' are the necessary way in which the absolute one exists, so that a vision of it as it is 'in itself' apart from this mode can hardly escape the condemnation of illusion.[1] Music is one way of expression. But its beauty cannot be definitely divided from that of poetry, which is not poetry if it is not music; nor from dancing, nor from architecture, nor from painting.[2] It may, like them, express the love of God or the joy of life. None can be limited or foretold. In the fantasies of Blake and the tortured Titans of Michelangelo, in a chorus-ending from Euripides and in the strange gravity of Piero dei Franceschi Nietzsche might have divined Dionysus, as he might Apollo in a melody of Mozart. It almost seems as if Nietzsche, like Kant,[3] must have asked what pictures and poems were 'about' and believed the answers. Yet he refused to believe the similar answers he surely might have got about music. Nietzsche is, indeed, a belated romantic. Rebelling against the calculated effects of rationalistic and cultured art, with its *beau idéal* and its idyllic shepherds, and not less against the coldly classical description of such art which had been supposed to exhaust the nature of beauty, he evades the problem of reconciliation by dividing the aesthetic realm into two independent kingdoms, in whose merely chance alliance its really indivisible spirit is once more to be found.

Thus we get Apolline art, the ideal of the Della Cruscans, and Dionysiac art, the ideal of the Corroboree; and their conjunction in Greek tragedy or Music, regarded as the ideal of all art.[4]

[1] Cf. Schiller, ibid., 25: 'First when man in his aesthetic stage distinguishes from himself the world of sense, does his personality emerge therefrom; and then first appears to him a world, because he has ceased to make one with it. . . . In the enjoyment of beauty, or aesthetic unity, there takes place an actual unification and interchange of matter and form, passion and activity.' Schiller, in fact, with a very different metaphysical prepossession, remarks on the two elements in a manner strikingly like that of Nietzsche. But he clearly sees that only in the union of the two can beauty consist.

[2] Cf. Pater, *The Renaissance*, 'Giorgione'.

[3] Cf. Chap. V, p. 76.

[4] Cf. Coleridge, *On Poesy and Art*: 'Passion itself imitates order and the order resulting produces a pleasurable passion', and *passim*. His language bears a remarkable resemblance to much of Nietzsche, especially – 'Whilst it recalls the sights and sounds that had accompanied the occasions of the original passions, poetry impregnates them

Nietzsche had sufficient scholarship to suspect that Hellenic art was not quite the polished personification of *Allgemeinheit* and *Heiterkeit* [Universality and Serenity] which to Winckelmann it had almost necessarily appeared.

10. And since the pure or 'formal' beauty of rhythm, metre, pattern, colour, and tone is at once even less attainable by the conscious processes of rule and purpose, and even more directly expressive of profound and universal emotion than is the 'representative' beauty of words and shapes more easily connected with concepts, he identifies this 'musical' element in expression both with Dionysus, in himself the negation of expression, and with a sublimity of the absolute, which he can oppose to beauty because by beauty he has only understood the 'polite'. *The Birth of Tragedy* reminds us often of the aesthetic doctrines of Plato, of Ruskin, and of Tolstoy; of all those Christian or ascetic preachers who implore us to turn away from the beautification of this life of sense to the solemnities of apocalyptic vision. But art is no respecter of persons. She gives one glory to the dust and to the stars. From the point of view of life we may wisely remember that no man keeps his temper sane and sweet who has refused to sacrifice to Apollo. Beauty at least is immanent; transcending individual life, she beats ineffectual wings in the inane. Shelley could really celebrate the dancing stars because, for all his idealisms, he could also change his piping, and sing of the daedal earth and the deluding maidens of the vale of Menalus.

## NOTE ADDED TO SECOND EDITION

There is a group of contemporary critics and painters whose common, though not very coherent, tendencies lead them to value exclusively at once Byzantine as against Greek and Renaissance art, formal as against representative, and El Greco, say, or Matisse as

---

with an interest not their own by means of the passions, and yet tempers the passion by the calming power which all distinct images exert on the human soul.' This is almost the voice of Zarathustra; see the passage cited in note 4 on p. 97 from § 5, and cf. §§ 6, 9, 16.

against Velasquez and the Italians. So far as any connected theory underlies such propaganda it seems based upon Nietzsche: that art should not aim at 'beauty' – that is at making us rest in contemplation of the expressive image – but should issue immediately in an emotion directed to practical ends: the work of art should not be attended to for its own sake but should secretly stimulate our behaviour. Hypnotic suggestion and the excitement of mob-passions would then be fine arts. Plato would be right: art could only be criticised morally, according as the activity induced were right or wrong; and it would be a fair judgement on El Greco that what he induces is religiosity.

CHAPTER VII

# Intellectualist Theories: Hegel

1. Hegel neglects nature, and treats art as one possible form for the expression of a certain kind of subject-matter. 2. Hence arises a classification of art. 3. The subject-matter of art. As it becomes more concrete it is of necessity successively embodied in (1) Symbolic Art; (2) Classical Art; (3) Romantic Art. 4. Each of these grades has an appropriate medium: (1) Architecture; (2) Sculpture; (3) Painting, music and poetry. 5. The obvious paradox of Hegel's theory is that with the attainment of the romantic grade art should vanish into philosophy. 6. The source of this error is a misapplication of dialectic, which involves (1) The gradation and suppression of art. 7. (2) The demonstrative prediction of artistic activity. 8. These doctrines lead to: (1) Distortion of the dialectic; (2) Violation of facts. 9. Hegel's exclusion of natural beauty. This is caused by a prejudice against inanimate beauty even when represented in art, and really implies a confusion between expression and symptom. 10. Hegel's fundamental aesthetic errors consist in the treatment of beauty as being—(1) a real quality of things proportionate to their 'spirituality'. 11 (2) Always the expression of the same thing; (3) the expression of something beautiful prior to the expression. 12. Hence every beauty is not one but three beauties. 13. Inseparableness of 'content' and 'expression'. Their distinction from, and casual connexion with communication. 14. Uniqueness of every beautiful thing. 15. Value of Hegel's aesthetics.

1. Hegel refuses to consider nature as strictly beautiful, and defines Aesthetic as the philosophy of Fine Art. The arguments[1] by which he intends to support this paradox really show that all beauty whether natural or artistic is the product of the human mind; and

[1] *Aestetik* (Einleitung), vol. i, p. 4. My references are to the Berlin 1842 (2nd) edition; vol. x, i, ii, iii, of the Works. The Introduction (Einleitung and Eintheilung) has been translated by Professor B. Bosanquet.

his method of treating the subject, rich in historical sympathy and knowledge, and guided by a profound conception of development, loses even more than another might have done by its comparative neglect of all those phases of aesthetic activity to which the human mind has been stimulated by the spectacle of the natural world. For him art is the presentation of truth (*Wahrheit*) or spiritual reality in sensuous form. It is a lower revelation of the same 'truth' which is more adequately grasped by religion and philosophy; or at least of some part of it, for some truths are artistically inexpressible[1] and only attainable by reflection.

2. Since then art gives the truth, which can be given also in other and indeed better ways, we can distinguish this common subject-matter from the artistic form in which it is presented. The content of art is the Idea, its form is the plastic use of images accessible to sense. From the possibilities of union between these two we can deduce both the limits and the forms of art. For art to succeed, its content must be one capable of sensuous presentation, it must not be abstract or prosaic. For instance, the Jewish[2] and Moslem ideas of God cannot be artistically presented, but only the Christian conception of him as a person; for to say of him merely that he is One is a lifeless abstraction of the irrational understanding. On the other hand, the highest Christian conception of God is not of a mere person, still less, of course, of a mere One, but rather of the absolute spirit which can only be grasped by thought, and to which, therefore, any sensuous presentation is fundamentally inadequate. The Christian conception, and indeed all modern culture, exhibits a stage at which art can no longer be our highest mode of consciousness of the absolute. We cannot worship works of art.

And since the essence of art lies in this adequacy of sensuous form to the content or concrete Idea expressed, art can be essentially divided into species or grades according to the degree of adequacy attained; and this will depend upon the concreteness or determin-

[1] i, p. 14. From this point to p. 108 I have endeavoured to reproduce briefly Hegel's theory in language as much like his own as possible. I am not sure that I have always understood it.

[2] i, p. 90. Yet Hebrew poetry, under the name of Sublime, is given a high place in the lowest of the three stages or grades of art, the Symbolic.

ateness with which the Idea is formulated and upon the nature of the medium in which it is expressed.[1]

3. This 'Idea' according to Hegel is mind or spirit, conceived neither in abstract generality nor in particular limited manifestations but as the unity of universal and particular, of freedom and necessity, of spiritual and natural; the infinite and yet determinate or individual mind.[2] It is not the Idea apprehended by Metaphysical Logic as the absolute, but the Idea developed in concrete, real shape.[3]

The differing degrees in which harmony of the Idea with its sensuous form is attained depend then, in the first place, on the degree of concreteness and determinateness with which the Idea is grasped. In the earlier stages of man's culture the Idea is abstract, and so cannot be really embodied or expressed in any form, but only typified or symbolized by some shape admittedly inadequate and arbitrarily selected. Thus stocks and stones have no real relation to the God, and even such an idol as a lion is related only to his abstract quality of strength. So since the Idea is too vague in itself to determine the details of form which shall embody it, these details are apt to expatiate in every kind of extravagance and distortion, intended to indicate the monstrosity of what is too indefinite to be expressed. The relation between the two sides is here one of mutual negation, and the Idea persists apart in Sublimity. This first stage is *Symbolic Art*,[4] found in pre-Hellenic antiquity and eminently in Egypt and the East.

But when men attained to a more concrete conception of the Idea as individual self-conscious spirit, they were able to discover a natural form properly expressive of it in the human body. *Classical Art*[5] attains in the ideal human form a perfectly harmonious ex-

[1] i, pp. 377–8.
[2] pp. 74, 80, 94 (Eintheilung), 118 (Theil 1), 135, 181.
[3] i, p. 94.
[4] i, pp. 381 to end of vol. i. Cf. Browning, *Fra Lippo Lippi*:

*A fine way to paint soul, by painting body*
*So ill the eye can't stop there, must go further*
*And can't fare worse.*

[5] ii, pp. 1–119. Cf. Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*:

*Nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul.*

pression of the universal human mind. This is the perfection of pure art and depends upon a relative immaturity of the human intellect, which having outgrown the vagueness of Oriental thought now conceives itself as adequately expressible in sensuous shape.

But mind absolute and eternal cannot finally express itself otherwise than as purely intellectual being; which opposes itself in its subjectivity to that outward life in which it must find itself; and the striving to effect this impossible expression results in *Romantic Art*,[1] which, though the sign of an advance in spirituality, is from the point of view of pure art a decline. For the two elements of form and content which classical art had fused in perfect harmony here fall apart, and we recur, though on a higher plane, to that antagonism, that inadequacy of the expression, which was the weakness of symbolism. That the classical stage should have been the perfection of art reveals the inherent imperfection of art itself – its inability to present, in the sensuous reality which is its necessary medium, a content which is truly infinite. So once more romantic art, aware of this inadequacy, is apt to neglect the form altogether, or to allow it to become fanciful and grotesque in its attempt to hint at what it despairs of expressing. But whereas at the earlier stage this was because the Idea was defective, it is now just because it is perfect.[2]

4. Each of these grades of the Idea has a natural and proper method of externalizing or embodying itself, a sensuous medium in which it can be best expressed.

Symbolic art, in which the form only points to the idea as something other than itself, is most successful in architecture, which bodies forth, as it were, not the living God but only a temple for his pleasure and for the honour of his worship. The building itself, obviously subject to mechanical laws and aiming only at symmetry, does not strictly present spirit but suggests it.

[1] ii, pp. 120–240. Cf. Browning, *Old Pictures in Florence*, xix.

> *On which I conclude that the early painters,*
> *To cries of 'Greek Art and what more wish you?' –*
> *Replied 'To become now self-acquainters,*
> *And paint man man, whatever the issue'.*

[2] i, p. 103.

Classical art, as we have seen, is most at home in sculpture, for the individual spirit actually dwells in and informs the human clay, so that there is no particle of the ideal body but is organically alive, sensitive and responsive, and no feeling, thought, or volition but can reveal itself in bodily shape, pose, and movement.

But when the god in spiritual individuality is housed in his temple, and the congregation assembles in devotion, a third stage of human consciousness is attained. The unity of religious aspiration and human brotherhood, in faith, hope, and charity, is a purely ideal one, which cannot be content with any external sign, nor embodied in any natural form. The subjective spirit of every individual worshipper now becomes of infinitely greater import by his personal relation to the divinity, and yet at the same time only retains this worth by an ideal union, through that relation, with his fellow-worshippers. God is now conceived as a spirit permeating his church. The medium to express this idea is to be found, Hegel supposes, in the romantic triad of painting, music, and poetry. All of these, as compared with the actual solidity of sculpture and architecture, are 'ideal' – meaning more than they actually are, sacrificing sensuous reality in order to shadow forth a higher truth of the spirit. In all these arts far greater freedom is allowed to individual characterization, degenerating often into caprice, subjectivity, and grotesqueness, than in the objective universality of classical art. But of the three he considers poetry to be the most spiritual, as depending least of all on any actual sensuous impression or extension in space and time, and working completely within the 'imaginative intellect'. Poetry is to music and painting as romantic art itself is to classical and symbolic.

But each of the arts appears at each grade of the idea. We find symbolic sculpture, painting, music, and poetry; classical architecture, painting, music, and poetry; and romantic architecture and sculpture. Only each grade reaches its highest achievement in the art most congenial to its nature, and each art works most freely in its proper grade. Symbolic art, then, is the struggle of art to come into being; classical art is the ideal or perfect art; romantic art is the straining of art to go beyond itself, though still in the artistic realm

and form.[1] The nature of beauty, the ideal of all art, consists in he knowledge of reality and of its concept, not separate and in abstraction as they remain for the inartistic consciousness, but immediately fused. The beautiful object then is self-contained; it does not stand over against something else as means to an end, object to a subject, necessity to accidents, whole to parts; all these abstract oppositions are overcome, or rather have not arisen.

5. It is impossible that such a bare outline of Hegel's *Aesthetik* should do it anything but injustice. It has often been remarked that no philosophical writer loses more by summary; and in such passages as the detailed account of the transition from classical to romantic art[2] he more than usually resists condensation.

But we must allow neither the grandeur of Hegel's philosophic conceptions, nor the range of his sympathy and acquaintance with art, nor the subtlety – comparable to that famous 'cunning of the Idea' itself – with which he follows the ramifications of his analysis into the details of universal history, to blind us to the staggering paradoxes which his system presupposes.

Can any theory of aesthetic be accepted of which it is an essential doctrine that the day of beauty is passed; not only in the sense that future artists will never equal the ancients – an indemonstrable thesis which has been and again might be the subject for much agreeable speculation – but with the deeper meaning that in philosophy and the Christian religion we have found actual substitutes, which better fulfil the very same functions to which art, in the world's childhood, had set its prentice hand?[3]

This seems to me to be a difficulty at which the most casual reader stumbles, yet one which is necessarily interwoven with fundamental errors as to the character of beauty; the most alarming symptom of an otherwise obscure though radical disease. Nor do I think that it can be explained away. Whether this surpassing of the artistic stage be understood to have place in the mind of the individual, or, as

[1] i, p. 102. [2] ii, pp. 100–42.

[3] ii, p. 136; iii, p. 232. Such a view is little advance on the Leibnitzian conception of art as *cognitio confusa*. We are almost reminded of the Edinburgh Reviewer (1805, on Southey's *Madoc*): 'It may be asserted that new sources of poetical beauty may be discovered; we have no faith in such discoveries.'

Hegel actually says, in the history of the world, it is equally fictitious. No man and no nation can afford to pity or despise aesthetic experience, or to put it away as a childish thing, by whose services he has learnt to dispense with it. Nor can Hegel be interpreted as alluding merely to the insufficiency of beauty for satisfying the needs of our spirit, which requires morality, religion, and philosophy as well as art. For if no more than this were meant, it would have to be admitted that the converse is no less true: neither philosophy, nor morality, nor religion can satisfy our whole being; from each and all we turn or return to beauty with unsated appetite, no less than from beauty to them. All are necessary, just because they are different and are not less or more perfect ways of doing, or rather knowing, the same thing.

6. The derivation of this error from Hegel's general metaphysical prepossessions and from his psychological situation has been clearly traced by Croce.[1] Hegel's great ambition in philosophy was to discover, or at least first to elaborate and make explicit, the theory of the synthesis of opposites: that in any pair of opposites, such as Being and Not-being, each of the two terms is by itself abstract, incomplete, and ultimately impossible without the other; that consequently any attempt to think one really necessitates the thought of the other, and that the truth of either is only attained by the synthesis of both in a third term such as Becoming, which alone, relatively to the thesis and antithesis, is concrete and real.

But, by an error incident to minds prepossessed with some pregnant thought, he proceeded to apply this triadic method of synthesis to terms not opposite but intrinsically or specifically different, with this result among others, that he came to think of art as on the one hand in itself incomplete and by a necessity of its own nature seeking

[1] *Ciò che è vivo ciò che è morto della Filosofia di Hegel.* It is much to be regretted that this admirable work remains untranslated in England. It contains incidentally the only very helpful criticism of the *Aesthetik* with which I am acquainted. My obligations to it will be obvious.

Gentile (*Le Forme Assolute dello Spirito*) follows Hegel more closely. Since art is only one of the activities of our minds, he describes it as contradictory and demanding to be synthesized with religion in philosophy. But he maintains that the moment of art is never superseded but must eternally be revived. *Il Modernismo*, pp. 235, 239. Cf. T. E. Hulme, *Speculations*; R. Fry, *Vision and Design*.

its completion in a higher synthesis, and on the other hand as being already itself the result of the synthesis of terms still more unsubstantial. Art then is to be taken up into and superseded by philosophy just as Romantic art had synthesized Symbolic and Classical,[1] and as each of these again could be bisected indefinitely.

In this way art, which is really one of the distinct activities of the spirit, is degraded to a form of error as compared with philosophy. It is never really explained why, having once outgrown it, we ever return to it with satisfaction, nor yet why from its highest form, poetry, which 'alone can express all that the mind conceives',[2] we resort with undiminished appetite to the partial and outgrown attempts of music and painting, still less to 'classical' sculpture or 'symbolic' architecture. 'Classical art is the adequate presentation of the Ideal, perfection in the realm of beauty. Nothing can be more beautiful. Yet there is a higher.'[3] This contradiction exhibits the error in both its forms. Within art we are asked to regard every form as a more or less successful attempt to attain a single end, as having its definite place, therefore, in the scale of merit, and therefore definitely capable of being surpassed and abandoned. And among human activities art is, similarly, one attempt, and not the best, to solve a single problem.[4] Hegel ridicules the notion that there is one ideally beautiful statue, yet he has himself fallen into the same mistake on a grander scale. The truth is that there are several functions of the mind, of which some may be seen to be prior to others as art to philosophy, but none of which, least of all the prior, can be dispensed with, any more than we can abandon breathing when we learn to walk. And within the special function of art there are as many ways of creating beauty as beautiful objects to be created, and each creation, so far as it is beautiful, is in its way perfect. That a

[1] It might have been expected that the Classical, as the perfection of art, would have been the synthesis of the other two. But this is plainly not Hegel's intention. Arbitrary arrangements are inevitable for an attempt to apply the 'dialectical method' to historical evolution. See Note at end of chapter.

[2] ii, p. 260; iii, p. 231.

[3] ii, p. 121.

[4] Cf. Croce, *Logica*, pp. 65–74, especially p. 72. Cf. Riegl, *Stilfragen*, *Spätrömische Kunst-Industrie*; Worringer, *Abstraktion u. Einfühling*; Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe Renaissance u. Barock*.

man is capable of philosophy need not put him out of love with art; nor yet does Shakespeare render Sophocles antiquated. One who is sensitive to the charm of Botticelli is on the whole less likely than one who is not to condemn Chinese painting as childish. But all such cases should logically be for Hegel relapses, comparable to the backsliding of one who, after grasping the true concept of Becoming, should attempt again to content himself with the one-sided abstraction of Being or Not-being.

7. The unwarranted extension of the dialectic method, besides the degradation of art to a philosophical failure and of 'classical' and 'symbolical' art to romantic failures, has another consequence which has already become apparent, since it is closely connected with the first two. This is the attempt to deduce or construct philosophically the individual historical fact.[1] 'If the Greek gods had not been true individuals,' says Hegel, 'they would have been deducible.' But when we find him prescribing *a priori* the proper degree of historical accuracy in fiction,[2] the correct course for modern artists to pursue,[3] and the right amount of clothes for a public or a family statue of Napoleon,[4] we suspect that he has forgotten his own caution. Or again, when we are told that sculpture must not be coloured, since spatial form and varied colour are distinct concepts only to be treated in abstraction;[5] and that it must not elaborate the eye since this is the visible sign of subjectivity; or that smell cannot be beautiful because, unlike sound, it destroys the object, we feel that our confidence in these *ex post facto* denunciations is little strengthened by the reasons adduced.

8. Hegel does not always escape a consciousness of these difficulties. Though he summarily dismisses many forms of art, such as

[1] Either by proving that a given work of art is beautiful (iii, p. 236: 'The decision whether anything is really a poetical work must first be derived from the concept of poetry itself'), or by proving that the schools and works of art which have arisen were logically bound to do so (*passim*), and showing the impossibility of other development. (See below.)

[2] i, p. 349.

[3] ii, p. 235.

[4] ii, p. 416.

[5] ii, pp. 357–60, and cf. iii, pp. 303–18, on the mutual exclusiveness of rhyme and rhythm. Luca della Robbia, the most classical renaissance sculptor, breaks the most of Hegel's rules.

dancing,[1] which is made an appendage of the drama, and sculpture in relief, which with other romantic styles is dismissed as 'not sculpture',[2] he is left with five arts to correspond to the three stages of the spirit, and hands over three to the romantic stage, while the symbolical and classical had been content with one apiece.[3] Defending his specification of the arts, he says that[4] all works which do not fall under these five species are imperfect, like those mongrel, amphibious, or transitional kinds of creatures which reveal the incapacity of nature to maintain her proper distinctions. So hybrid works of art may be delightful and meritorious but not perfect. Yet he cannot but recognize the importance of many beautiful products which escape the dialectical mesh, and is driven to deny them the name of art, in his strictly defined sense of that word, just as he denied the name of sculpture to the monuments of the Medici, of Ilaria del Carretto and of Guidarello Guidarelli. 'The sphere of the objects of developed romantic art is infinite, as comprising not only what is necessary, but the indiscriminate portrayal of everyday reality, with even a preference for the prosaic and ugly. Is this Art? From the point of view of the Ideal, that is to say, of a permanent and necessary content with its absolutely appropriate form, we must answer, No. But art contains another moment, the side of individual talent, which can be true to the substantial life of nature, as to the shapes of the spirit, even in its strangest and most arbitrary manifestations. And by this truth and by the cleverness of presentation, a meaning is given to every trifle. From this point of view we must answer, Yes.'[5] And again, 'The romantic content does not remain essentially artistic, but leaves the determination both of the content and of the form to arbitrary invention; excluding nothing, but re-

[1] ii, p. 261. [2] ii, p. 362.

[3] Cf. his devices for making the actual conformation of the globe symmetrical with his system, *Naturphilosophie*, § 339 (vol. vii. 1, p. 442), concluding: 'Europa bildet das Bewusstsein, den vernünftigen Theil der Erde, dessen Mitte Deutschland ist. Die Welttheile sind also nicht zufällig getheilt; sondern das sind wesentliche Unterschiede.' [It is Europe which forms the historical consciousness, the rational element, in the world, and its central point is Germany. So the continents are not chance divisions but real differences.]

[4] Paraphrased from ii, p. 261.

[5] Paraphrased from ii, pp. 219–20.

presenting everything which man is capable of making his own, whether this is proper to any definite stage of art or no.'[1] Here is the old paradox, that the highest function of art is best performed by something which has ceased to be art; art was perfectly art only at a relatively low stage.[2] We should expect classical art, as the most artistic, to be the synthesis of the other two forms.

Clearly on these lines Hegel would be logically bound to refuse to recognize an object as beautiful not only if it resisted classification as Symbolic, Classical or Romantic, but even if it were excluded by the much finer reticulations of his dialectic; a simile, for instance, which could be catalogued under none of the three subdivisions ($\alpha\alpha$) or ($\beta\beta$) or ($\gamma\gamma$) of the subsection II, i, III, B. 3, c, $\gamma$.[3] This is the old scholastic criticism, dear to Polonius, of the 'Kinds'.

Here we see Hegel applying to individual historical events like the decoration of the Sistine Chapel, or to merely empirical classes of such events, like Religious Painting, that method of dialectical demonstration which belongs properly to *opposites*, but which we have already seen him misusing for *distinct* spiritual functions.

Hegel then was wrong in maintaining that art is an inferior form or superseded moment of philosophy; in elevating empirical distinctions within the aesthetic sphere – Symbolic, Classical, Romantic, with their subdivisions – to the rank of philosophical conceptions and applying to them in their turn the triadic method of supersession or synthesis; and lastly in his attempt to deduce dialectically the historical occurrence and the success of individual artistic acts. All these faults are intimately connected with his general philosophical error of extending the dialectic method beyond its proper sphere.

There remains to be noticed one other source of weakness, which,

[1] Paraphrased from ii, p. 235.

[2] Cf. *Philosophie des Geistes*, § 562 (vol. vii. 2, p. 444), where Beauty is denied to the products of the romantic arts, apparently on the ground that they most truly express the spirit. But if the works of Titian, Shakespeare, and Beethoven are not beautiful, what is?

[3] i, pp. 523–5.

ii. This confusion is common to Idealist and Materialist dialectics. Aristotle, in his Metaphysics, had distinguished, not always consistently, ἕτερον from ἐνάντιον and ἀντικείμενον.

though not unrelated to his main philosophic attitude, is more specially aesthetic: his exclusive emphasis, namely, upon artistic as distinct from natural beauty.

9. The dangers of such an exclusion and the want of justification for it have already been touched upon in the second chapter, but Hegel's case is somewhat peculiar. It is not really between art and nature that his distinction is drawn, or rather he has confused this with another distinction: between human life – as represented in poetry, music, painting, sculpture and, indirectly, in architecture – and animate or inanimate nature whether actual or represented by art.

It is his great merit to have divined that art is the expression of spirit or the concrete Idea, not of those abstract 'ideas' or natural laws of which it is still for Schopenhauer the contemplation.[1] But by expression he seems to understand symptom.[2] For him the human

[1] Yet he is not prepared to see in art the individual. It is something called the concrete universal, or the universalized individual. Hence children are specially beautiful as not being yet determined to particularity of character (i, p. 191), and the individual thoroughly determined by fact is prose (i, p. 188).

[2] Cf. especially *Philosophie des Geistes*, § 558 (vol. vii. 2, p. 442). Here he says that art must *use* natural forms in accordance with *their* significance, which it must divine and possess itself of. And he refers to § 411 (p. 239), where the human body is spoken of as a sign (*Zeichen*) of soul, which it represents (*vorstellt*), and as the soul's work of art, which has 'pathognomical and physiognomical expression' (*Ausdruck*). Among such expressions he enumerates the upright human posture, the shape of the hand, etc., but only speech is the complete expression of mind. This accords with the view in the *Aesthetik* that classical art, of which sculpture is the type, is more perfectly artistic than romantic art, of which poetry is the type; since the human body is the actual symptom or sign of an indwelling soul, while language is only its expression. He does not ask how far all language, as expressing spirit, is art. In § 562 (p. 444) he actually says that romantic art gives up the attempt to express spirit by beauty.

In *Aesthetik*, iii, pp. 144–5, he speaks of Interjections as *merely natural* expressions (*Ausdrücke*) not articulated *arbitrary* signs of ideas (*willkürliche Zeichen von Vorstellungen*) like speech. And for that reason they are not expressive of a content *in its universality* but merely announce a feeling by tone, and this is not art. But music deprives this natural expression (*Naturausdruck*) of its wild crudity, though it is compelled to elaborate its sensible material with much greater art than painting or poetry, by the fact that this material is a merely natural symptom. Which I take to imply that light or colour and language are essentially expressive. Here we have an acceptable distinction between mere physical symptom and spiritual expression. But it is combined with the old assumption that expression must be arbitrary and conventional; so that poetry should (consistently with the passages quoted from iii, p. 138 (*infra*, p. 114) and from *Philosophie des Geistes* (above)) be considered less artistic than interjection, though a

body is the only adequate *artistic* presentation of mind because in it mind actually resides.[1] Even speech is only an audible symbol, more or less arbitrary,[2] of what body actually presents; and for this reason his account of poetry is apt to seem intellectualistic, depreciating all the really expressive elements of rhythm, metre, and tone, wherein spirit surely embodies itself no less than in legs and noses, in favour of the abstract theme or content regarded as separately existent.[3] For this reason also sculpture is to him the ideal of art as such, followed by figure-painting, by music as expressing feeling in natural tones, by poetry – spiritually the highest – as describing man's feelings, acts, and thoughts by artificial signs. Here is the real gap; a gulf in the scale of beauty, not a distinction between art and nature. We continue downwards with architecture,[4] animals, plants, scenery, light, arabesques; for all these, whether they occur in reality or in representative art are not symptoms of the actual presence, real or imagined, of spirit; they can only be used, as he says, to point to or indicate spirit 'as their other'. Animals are in a doubtful position, but on the whole not very beautiful either in nature or art, because spirit is not inwardly realized in them.[5] Yet beasts are more beautiful than scenery; all beasts, apparently, than any scenery ever can be, for they are nearer to spirit.[6] Nature only gets an imputed beauty

---

higher activity as symbolizing a more 'universal' content. But it is difficult to think that the distinction between *Zeichen* and *Ausdruck* is the same in all passages; and the refining method ascribed to Music seems vague and irrelevant.

[1] ii, pp. 12, 13. Hegel was certainly prepossessed by Hellenic humanism, and probably repelled by the sentimental nature-worship of his contemporaries.

[2] iii, p. 8.

[3] iii, p. 138. 'In poetry . . . the articulate sound of man's vocal organ is degraded to a mere verbal sign (*Redezeichen*), and so retains only the value of signifying ideas without having any import in itself.' Cf. pp. 225–6, 233, 274–7, 296, 'blosses Mittheilungsmittel'. On p. 227 we are actually told that a poem can be translated without essential detriment. Poetical form and diction are consequently regarded as external ornament, iii, pp. 235, 278, 289, 291; as a technical beauty (*dichterisch*) superadded to the expressive (*poetisch*), p. 283.

[4] ii, pp. 266–8: 'Architecture can only indicate, in a sort of external setting, the meaning grafted into it.' Cf. iii, p. 125.

[5] ii, pp. 158, 184.

[6] i, p. 167. To which one feels only able to reply: 'Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie, Und *grün* des Lebens goldene Baum.' [Theory is always gray, but the golden tree of life is green] Goethe, *Faust*.

'by arousing our emotions and harmonizing therewith',[1] though in any sense in which this is true it is surely true of every conceivable beautiful object. 'To merely natural things only an appearance of spirit can be externally lent by art.'[2]

Had Hegel been content to abide by his distinction of Art and Nature, natural scenery represented in art would of course have fallen on the superior side of the division. But the description of scenery in poetry is either neglected or belittled in almost the same words in which the scenery itself had been condemned,[3] and at first no justification is offered for the painting of lifeless objects 'which in nature we should have overlooked' except the skill of imitation which gives them a human interest.[4] He seems to think that objects actually are beautiful or the reverse in definite ways, apart from any creative act by which the spectator's mind expresses

[1] i, p. 167. I leave musicians to criticize the argument that birds' song may express emotion but cannot be beautiful because it has no objective content. *Phil. d. Geschichte*, II. iii. 1.

[2] i, p. 194; ii, p. 256. [3] i, p. 530; cf. p. 167.

[4] i, p. 206; iii, p. 29. The more sympathetic account of landscape painting in iii, pp. 53–60 ought also to justify the beauty of nature. 'In diese Lebendigkeit (der Natur) kann der Mensch sich einleben und so auch in der Natur innig sein.' [Man can enter into the life of nature and so be nature's self.] But surely the necessity for this imaginative act is not peculiar to landscape. On p. 60 it is admitted that any object whatever may be made beautiful by the painter if his loving treatment of it has rescued it from its practical relations and set it apart for pure contemplation as expressive of spirit. This fine passage may be accepted. But why were we asked to accept a quite different explanation of sculpture and religious painting? And why should it not apply to the aesthetic enjoyment of nature itself?

Cf. iii, p. 124: 'Das was zu jedem Kunstwerk gehört gehört auch zur Malerei; die Anschauung, was überhaupt am Menschen, am menschlichen Geist und Charakter was der Mensch und was dieser Mensch ist.' A truth difficult to reconcile with i, pp. 14, 84–95. [What is implied in every work of art must apply to painting – the intuition which belongs universally to the human mind and nature, what mankind and every man is.]

This is an excellent instance of the way in which Hegel's insight into the nature of particular forms of art breaks through the lines of his system when this would distort it. Cf. especially the fine passages in iii, pp. 54, 55, 60.

The considerations whether, and if so why, men have achieved self-expression (*sich einleben und innig sein*) in the human form more often or more easily than in scenery, words, tones, and unrepresentative lines or colours, and whether again in any of these artificially produced rather than in nature, belongs to psychology, historical or speculative, but cannot concern our theory of beauty in general as always involving an imaginative activity in the mind of him who experiences it.

itself in them.[1] This degree of beauty that he would fasten upon the things depends upon the degree to which they are *symptomatic* of the presence of spirit. Now among natural objects only the human body – and especially the face – is a sign of the presence of a spirit; but every artificial thing is a sign of the existence of the maker's spirit, though, like a face or a flower, it can only become *expressive* by the activity of a beholder – the maker or another – who expresses himself in it. From the confusion of sign and expression arises, I think, Hegel's preference of art to nature and of art dealing with humanity to any other.[2]

10. Here, then, we may point out two fundamental aesthetic mistakes. The first is that Hegel has failed to see that for a work of art to appear beautiful it must stimulate us to an expressive activity just the same in kind[3] as that which he allows we must perform in the presence of natural objects. We are apt to be early thus disposed towards the human face or body, not that it is spatially nearer to a mind than other things are, not even only because mind more immediately alters its actual qualities of shape and colour than it does those of a tree or mountain, but because it is a thing whose subtlest variation of movement and shape we have had good cause for taking to heart, and which we may have already loved on other grounds. But we are not a whit less naturally at home with every modulation of tone in that human voice which checked and soothed us before the visible world had dawned upon our eyes; and I see no metaphysical reason for thinking a sob or laughter less organic to

[1] Contrast Mitchell, *Structure and Growth of the Mind*, p. 173: 'Whether we see the same sunlit sea to be smiling frankly or in treachery is a matter of our mood.'

[2] i, p. 211, and cf. *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (vol. ii, p. 551): 'So wesentlich es der Bildsäule ist, von Menschenhänden gemacht zu sein, eben so wesentlich ist der Schauspieler seiner Maske – nicht als äusserliche Bedingung, von der die Kunstbetrachtung abstrahiren müsse – oder insofern davon in ihr allerdings zu abstrahiren ist, so ist eben diess damit gesagt, dass die Kunst das wahre eigentliche Selbst noch nicht in ihr enthält.' [As essential as it is to the statue to be made by man, so essential is the actor to the part he plays, not merely as an external condition, which from the artistic point of view is irrelevant. In so far as this irrelevance has be to admitted, we should have to admit that art has failed to achieve its proper individuality.]

[3] Cf. pp. 23–30, *supra*.

the spirit than a blush, a smile, or the angle of an eyelid.[1] And though the so-called inanimate world thus seems to start with a disadvantage of strangeness, yet this has rapidly been made up as spirit has extended its boundaries and made its tabernacle not of clay but of the sea and clouds.[2] Very early it was seen that the morning stars sang together; man lifting up his eyes unto the hills found help and saw how the heavens declared the glory of God. Or every shape of nature awoke to breath and beauty in sympathy with human longings; the wrath of Poseidon, the deep passion of Pan, the laughing loves of nymphs and dryads, the proud chastity of the maiden huntress, were all watched, in tossing waves, the fierce yet dreamy growth of summer in wild places, the ripples and the whispering reeds, or the serenity of a reigning moon, by quick and kindly eyes of men who read there passions to which themselves were subject, as directly as in the body of the athlete or the rhapsode's song. Today most men may meet a thousand of their fellows or see a gallery of sculpture indifferently, may hear and read millions of words with listlessness; and then, just because it has no business with them, no call upon their good offices or their understanding, may awake in a moment to the perfect expressiveness of a bird's cry or a lifting cloud. In art as in nature, in poetry as in architecture, we receive but what we give, or in proportion to what we give. The ugliness of the turbot for Hegel,[3] like that of the Elgin marbles for Payne Knight,[4] is just the negative element of passivity in the self

[1] It is hard to combine a bitter tone of voice with a pleasant expression of face, and the converse is still more difficult. In both cases the actual words make little difference, for a harsh word spoken with a kind smile and gentle tone inevitably takes on a playful meaning, and a kind word with a frown and a harsh tone an ironical one, not only to the hearer but in the speaker's own mind.

[2] Cf. Wordsworth's sonnet, 'Brook whose society the poet seeks':

*I would not do*
*Like Grecian artists, give thee human cheeks,*
*Channels for tears; no naiad shouldst thou be,*
*Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs;*
*It seems the eternal soul is clothed in thee*
*With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,*
*And hath bestowed on thee a better good;*
*Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.*

[3] i, p. 161.

[4] *Quarterly Review*, x, January 1816.

or resistance in the object, which must stand over against the activity of self-expression in the object before any experience of beauty can be realized.

The second fundamental aesthetic mistake leads us back to one of Hegel's general philosophical errors. It lies in the supposition that every work of art is an attempt to express the same thing, just as each grade of art, and art itself, had been held to aim at expressing one absolute truth ultimately attainable by philosophy. Hegel was right in bringing back beauty to the expression of spirit and nothing but spirit. But he was wrong in supposing that it is spirit in self-identical universality which can be thus expressed, instead of those countless individual and unique acts of attraction and repulsion in which a spirit becomes actual. Every beautiful thing, or, in other words, every work of art,[1] is an individual expression, an expression of something that cannot be expressed in any other way and therefore cannot be known apart from its unique expression. Hegel's divergence from this view leads him into some strange difficulties. He holds there is a proper poetical subject-matter apart from form, and a poetical form apart from subject-matter.[2] And by form here he does not even mean 'the mere verbal sign or means of communication', but 'ideas', mental images or intuitions;[3] for 'these are the forms in which poetry grasps and presents every content', they are the sensible material of the poet just as marble, colour, and musical tones[4] are for the other arts.

12. In a poem, then, Hegel distinguishes the content (*Inhalt, Sache*), the poetical form (*Vorstellung*) which this takes in the mind, and the verbal expression of this; and each of these three must by itself have poetical quality. He tells us[5] that the line '*Als nun die dämmernde Eos mit Rosenfingern emporstieg*' is a poetical *idea* of the

[1] Cf. pp. 27, note 1, 78–79, 124.

[2] iii, pp. 244–5. Cf. the statement (see p. 103, *supra*) that a subject fit for art must be already 'not prosaic'. Cf. pp. 112–113, *supra*.

[3] iii, p. 227: 'die Vorstellung, die Anschauung, Empfindung'.

[4] This is Hegel's collocation. Surely it should be either 'form, colour, tone' or 'marble, pigment, vibrating substances'. Cf. iii, p. 270.

[5] iii, p. 277. The italics are mine.

*same content* as the words 'sun' or 'morning,' '*Ημος δ' ἠριγενέια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς,' or the words Sun and Morning, or, I suppose, 'The Morn in russet mantle clad'; and again[1] that this idea can be *expressed* in other languages without poetic loss. To the first statement we must reply that in that case the content (*Inhalt, Sache*) is aesthetically as irrelevant as the poet's health; and to the last, that it is untrue.[2]

13. Of such distinctions there is, I think, nothing to be made. In every art the external act of chipping marble, laying on paint, striking notes must, like that of reciting or writing verse, be preceded or accompanied by an 'idea'. But this idea or 'expressive intuition' may be complete in itself. If it is a visual image it can be communicated to, or stimulated in, others by sculpture or painting; if auditory, by music or poetry. In no case *need* the externalization affect the expression any more than in poetry itself.[3] And in poetry no more than elsewhere can the content be known except in its expression. What we cannot put into words may perhaps be a good picture, but as a poem it does not exist. What we can clearly see or visualize as beautiful is a good picture whether we can paint or no. For instance, I may be able to visualize clearly a crescent moon shining through a pine tree, and I may find this beautiful. This is an expression of such a kind that it could probably best be communicated to other people by painting, but Hegel appears to consider it the 'poetic material' or 'form' of some mysterious other

[1] iii, p. 277.

[2] Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*: 'It were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet.' And on translation Shelley had the right to speak. One is almost tempted to think Hegel had never tried it. Let any sceptic attempt to reproduce the feeling, even of prose, from such a similar language as German (e.g., the quotation on p. 95, note). Amusing instances of the effort to translate single terms may be found in Rolland, *Jean Christophe*, vol. iv, p. 32: *Sehnsucht* (*Désir*), *Fülle der Liebe* (*Plénitude de l'amour*), etc. It is possible that a translation might be an improvement, especially an inaccurate translation. A German has told me that Heyne's *Iliad* is such. I recommended Pope's.

[3] This must be taken with the important reservation on p. 120, *infra*. The stimulants which most people find helpful to artistic creation, such as fresh air, leisure and exercise, crystal-gazing, and scribbling with pen or paint-brush, are not essential to the true work of art. Cf. the careful confession of Mozart quoted p. 124 note, *infra*. See A. E. Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*.

'poetic content'. The expression which I might try to communicate by writing, printing, or speaking a line of poetry, for instance, 'With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,' is that which I accomplished by composing, remembering, hearing, or in any way *aesthetically* experiencing the line 'With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky.'[1] That line is an expression of something which cannot be expressed or known in any other way,[2] though I may know what experiences preceded or stimulated it, as for instance, perhaps some other aesthetic act such as the seeing or imagining of a crescent moon shining beautifully through a pine tree, or of a picture of this, or some unaesthetic act, such as taking a stimulant.

Many artistic creations can only be completed in the visible presence of natural objects, some only while setting the paint-brush to the canvas, and others only in the actual hearing of artificially arranged sounds. But the 'content' or subject of a work of art is not knowable outside that work, and nothing is added to that work by its communication to others.

14. So neither nature and poetry, nor *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, can be arranged in a hierarchy of beauty by any gradation of their content. All are different expressions, different in some degree to each of us and at every experience; so that the turbot need not be always uglier than the monkey nor an athletic and enlightened philanthropist more beautiful than a disreputable and hunchbacked beggar.

[1] Strictly speaking, the work of art might be different on every occasion. Clearly context or the voice of a reciter might alter its expressiveness greatly.

[2] Cf. A. C. Bradley, Oxford Lectures, *Poetry for Poetry's Sake*: 'In poetry the meaning and the sounds are one; there is, if I may put it so, a resonant meaning or a meaning resonance'; and 'If the substance means ideas, images and the like taken alone, and the form means the measured language taken by itself, this is a possible distinction, but it is a distinction of things not in the poem, and the value lies in neither of them.' Cf. note on p. 180, *infra*.

Also Mitchell, *Structure and Growth of the Mind*, p. 63: 'Though two different sentences say the same thing, the thing as it is thought in one is only partly the same as it is thought in the other. There would be a difference even if the words were the same, and the difference were in their order merely, or their emphasis. Finally, in reading the same words we do not all form quite the same thoughts.'

15. In truth the great value of Hegel's *Aesthetik* lies surprisingly little[1] in its truth as a systematic philosophy of art. The very greatness of his philosophical genius seems, by a perverse fate, to have stood in the way of his success here. It need not be said that by its discussion of other theories, and by its own flashes of insight, it is of first-rate importance for the philosophy of the subject. But it is also a great work of criticism, of that historical psychology which is the necessary propaedeutic to the appreciation of art produced by ancient or alien peoples. Hegel's aesthetic prepossessions were as markedly humanist and dramatic as Ruskin's were naturalistic; and by its profound analysis of the Oriental, Classical, and Mediaeval minds as these expressed themselves in architecture, sculpture, and poetry, the *Aesthetik* must stand, for the appreciation of this side of beauty, in the place which is filled for the love of nature by Ruskin's studies in cloud and mountain form or in the morphology of plant and glacier.[2]

[1] I mean little in proportion to his influence as a philosopher and the importance of the work. The 'flash of insight' which showed him beauty, or at least art, as expression, and expression of spirit (see *supra*, p. 113), illuminates the whole book.

[2] The profundity of Hegel's insight into the psychological conditions of religious development, and the danger of identifying this with the evolution of art up to his own time, are shown by the fact that modern anthropological and archaeological researches tend to treat Greek religion itself as conveniently divided into three main stages: the '*Urdummheit*' or reign of vague awe, the Olympian or anthropomorphic period, and the philosophic return to an impersonal deity on a higher level. The language in which these are described is sometimes reminiscent of Hegel's account of Oriental, Greek, and modern religion. Cf. Miss Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, and Professor G. Murray's *Greek Epic* and *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, and Hegel's *Philosophie der Religion*, ii.

Hegel's account of 'Kunst-Religion' in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, vol. ii, pp. 527–60, seems to me to show that what he is really doing, both here and in the greater part of the *Aesthetik*, is to give a historical psychology which shall explain what sorts of experience at various times men have been trying to express in their art, and how they came to be prepossessed at any particular time with this particular 'subject-matter'. But this is not a theory of beauty.

It is instructive that Professor Murray has now (1928) found it useful to distinguish *Five Stages of Greek Religion*.

In modification of the criticism in §§ 12, 13 of this chapter see my article 'Art without Form', in *Philosophy*, January 1941.

## NOTE TO PAGE 109

Cf. T. E. Hulme, *Speculations*; R. Fry, *Vision and Design*; Riegl, *Stilfragen* and *Spätrömische Kunst-Industrie*; Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*; Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* and *Renaissance und Barok*.

CHAPTER VIII

# The Expressionist Theory: Croce

I. Expression. 1. The aesthetic activity is completed internally. 2. It may be described as self-expression. Meaning of 'expression'. 3. This activity is often called a 'sentiment' to distinguish it from knowledge in general as well as from conduct. For it is knowledge neither of the universal, nor of the historic fact, but of the individual. 4. What is expressed is passion – that is, desire or volition. 5. Intuition distinguished from perception. 6. Intuition of the individual identified by Croce with expression of passion. He regards this identification as necessary for idealism. 7. Croce distinguishes such expression from mere fancy. 8. And maintains the possibility of its communication. 9. Difficulties of identifying all intuition with expression of emotion. 10. (1) Some intuitions seem unemotional (but these may be not pure intuitions but perceptions). 11. (2) Is it really consistent with the possibility of communication? Croce's answer seems to imply the perception of a really existing medium (and therefore also an intuition which is not expression) as well as the existence of other spirits. 12. If we know nothing but acts of will some of these are not our own. 13. And some are not any human being's. These arguments, which are fatal to subjective idealism, seem also conclusive against identifying intuition with expression.

II. The Kinds. 1. Within beauty are no real kinds; and therefore there are no rules of art. 2. Beautiful individuals are most conveniently grouped by the prominence of one or other moment of beauty. 3. Comedy most plausibly claims separate definition, but hitherto without success (see Appendix B).

III. The Subject. 1. Beauties differ in the emotions they express; their common beauty consists in expression. 2. The only necessary quality of the emotion is genuineness. The object of purely aesthetic satisfaction or criticism is pure expression. 3. Degrees of beauty. 4. (1) In extension. 5. (2) In perfection. 6. (3) In profundity.

## I. EXPRESSION

1. Croce assumes the identity of art and beauty[1] and distinguishes this from what is commonly called the work of art.[2] Beauty is no quality of things[3] whether trees or pigments, but, like every other value, only comes into being as the nature of a spiritual activity. Its *esse* is *percipi*. This spiritual activity is the aesthetic experience of the man who finds beauty in a cathedral or a tragedy, a sunset or a tune. A man rich in such experiences has the artistic nature richly actualized, even if a rare temperament has enabled him to maintain its exercise without the common stimulus of communication, and he remain for ever mute and inglorious. My work and my satisfaction *as an artist* are completed when I have made a melody or a poem, and when I have seen or imagined, in the expression of every detail,[4] a landscape; and nothing artistic will be added then by my putting pen to paper or paper to the press. Yet pen and paper or actual sounds or colours are the mechanical aids without which many of us indeed can completely imagine an epigram or a quatrefoil, some few, like Mozart, an opera, but no one perhaps an epic or an altarpiece.[5]

The case in this respect is not very different from that of knowledge, where the writing or speaking of what is already clearly

[1] *Estetica*, pp. 114, 139, 187; cf. *supra*, Chap. II. II.

[2] Ibid., ch. xv. [3] Ibid., chs. xiii, xiv.

[4] Ibid., p. 13: 'Il pittore è pittore perché vede ciò che altri sente solo, o intravede ma non vede.' [The painter is a painter because he sees what others only feel or glimpse without really seeing.] Cf. *Problemi di Estetica*, pp. 247–55, especially 251, and *Filosofia della Pratica*, p. 54.

[5] 'My ideas come as they will, I don't know how, all in a stream. If I like them I keep them in my head, and people say that I often hum them over to myself. Well, if I can hold on to them, they begin to join on to one another, as if they were bits that a pastry-cook should join together in his pantry. And now my soul gets heated, and if nothing disturbs me the piece grows larger and brighter until, however long it is, it is all finished together in my mind, so that I can see it at a glance, as if it were a pretty picture or a pleasing person. Then I don't hear the notes one after another, as they are hereafter to be played, but it is as if in my fancy they were all at once. And that *is* a revel (*das ist non ein Schmaus*). While I'm inventing, it all seems to me like a fine vivid dream; but that hearing it all at once (when the invention is done), that's the best. What I have once so heard I forget not again, and perhaps this is the best gift that God has granted me.' Mozart, quoted by Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 457. I believe the ascription has been questioned.

known in no way makes it truer, though few minds are able to conceive and bring to birth a coherent truth of any complexity without the stimulus of recording or exposition. The social activity of publication is no peculiarity of art. We wish also to communicate our philosophies, our politics and our bad temper.

2. But while the true work of art is not dependent upon communication it has its very being in expression.[1] Nothing which we cannot clearly express to ourselves by actual or imagined sound, colour, word, shape or in some other way, is beautiful, and no colour, sound, or shape is beautiful which is not thus expressive. That which has to be expressed and that which can express it first become beautiful when indistinguishably fused in the expression. We do not really *know* a feeling until it is somehow – visibly, linguistically, musically – expressed; then only does it become 'a determinate feeling'.[2] A mountain, a poem, a song is beautiful to the man whose feelings are expressed in it; and it makes no difference whether we say that it expresses them to him or he expresses them in it. Strictly speaking, it is not language which expresses but the man who uses or understands it, and so too in the case of the artist and his picture. But we have maintained throughout that the man who appreciates a picture or a mountain aesthetically is in his degree an artist. None of these things is beautiful to him unless he expresses in it his feelings or, which once more is the same thing, it expresses, that is reveals, them to him. The writer of a poem expresses his passion in it. It expresses the passion to me, but only on condition that I have some such passion to express. The truth is that in reading a poem I express myself in it, I find words for what I have already been, and so first come fully to know it. It is true that for good or evil, we are not all Romeos or Macbeths or Shakespeares; but unless, for good or evil, we have all something of Romeo and Macbeth and Shakespeare in us, unless we have had moments when our experience has been what theirs perhaps constantly was – though theirs was also so much more – all their talking must be for us words.[1]

[1] *Estetica*, pp. 11–14, 30, 31.

[2] See the quotation from Nettleship on p. 180, note 1.

[3] Iago and characters whom we describe as 'impressive but scarcely real' generally express our own (and the poet's) indignation and the like. See pp. 170–2.

We should not know what they mean, for to us they would mean nothing. Language only has a meaning for me when in hearing it I express myself in it. And then it may always have some aesthetic value; for, though in an ordinary conversation this is negligible in comparison with its scientific or historical value as giving useful information, the very same conversation may have obvious aesthetic interest when by its setting in a play or novel it is deprived of any other.

Similarly a scent or colour may have beauty just so far as it expresses to us feeling, but we are apt to be preoccupied by its significance for our purposes. Often it is only when the colour is framed or when we are asked to admire the landscape that we see the beauty of what we have long studied or used. For only and always that in which we can recognize the expression of our feelings is beautiful to us.

3. Art then, or the experience of beauty, is for Croce, as for Hegel, for Schopenhauer, and in a sense for Kant, a form of knowledge, or rather it belongs to the theoretic as opposed to the practical side of our nature. To him these alone are the real alternatives; for though he recognizes the advance which at certain stages has been made by assigning it to a supposed third province, that of feeling or sentiment, he holds that this is no distinct faculty of the mind but only a provisional or negative conception useful in the growth and polemic of knowledge[1] to indicate something, men knew not what, but certainly not what was contended for by their adversaries. Thus the description of morality as a sense or sentiment would be an advance beyond its confusion with knowledge, and a step to the attainment of the true moral concept; and those who assigned art to 'the feelings' were, so far, justified against those who simply identified it with knowledge, of which it is but one particular kind, or with a kind of knowledge which it is not.[2] Art indeed is the knowledge of the individual. It is no more to be confused with thinking or philosophy[3] whose object is the universal, than with moral or

[1] *Practica*, ch. ii. [2] *Estetica*, p. 21.

[3] Ibid., p. 40. By 'individual' in the preceding sentence Croce, of course, does not mean individual person, but individual act of desire or will.

hedonistic conduct. Aristotle was mistaken in thinking that while poetry deals with the universal, history is confined to the particular, as, for instance, what Alcibiades did or suffered. The acts of Alcibiades may, and indeed in one sense must have been, individual, but it is not the historian who does them; he judges both that they occurred and what was their nature, and there is no judgement without conceptual thinking.[1] It is to the influence of Aristotle that we must in great part trace the constant tendency to describe art's object as some kind of universal; while the diverse modifications of universality which have been from time to time devised may be ascribed to an uneasy apprehension of the truth. The good fortune of priority secured for Plato on this point an immunity which neither the concrete universals of the Hegelians nor the Platonic ideas of Schopenhauer could effect; Kant only for a moment found an escape.

What truly differentiates history is that, since it is matter of fact, its faculty is perception or memory; while that of art is imagination – or, if this word implies feigning, intuition – for which there is neither truth nor falsehood, reality nor fiction but only the intuited or imagined individual.[2] And this intuition for Croce is the same thing as expression.

We have now before us the two crucial difficulties of the *Estetica:* How can we identify intuition with expression? and: What, according to Croce, is expressed (or intuited) – what is that matter (to use his own language) whose form the aesthetic activity must supply?[3]

It will probably be better to deal with the latter question first. What was that which we express (or intuit) before we had expressed (or intuited) it? The simplest answer is that we cannot tell, it is only by expression (or intuition) that it becomes knowable. Form and matter in our aesthetic experience must not be thought of as two things such as a bottle and the water it contains,[4] but as an indivisible unity. Otherwise we shall fall into all those difficulties which arise from considering art as the sum of two qualities or values, that

[1] *Logica*, chs. iv, v, and p. 1: 'perception presupposes the logical activity'.
[2] *Estetica*, p. 33; *Problemi*, pp. 14, 15, 26; *Practica*, p. 186.
[3] Ibid., p. 8.
[4] *Problemi*, p. 21.

of the subject and that of the treatment. But Croce has another answer: though in knowing the matter we should give it form, yet by the critical method we can say what sort of thing that must be which precedes the creative act in which we come to have the aesthetic experience.[1] Indeed at first sight it may be thought that we are offered two answers not obviously compatible. What is intuited in a work of art is character, individual physiognomy;[2] and again, intuitions are: this river, this lake, this cup of water.[3] Such sayings are apt to give, and to some casual readers and critics certainly have given, the impression that an individual external object of perception, a river or a man, is the matter to which the aesthetic activity gives forms. But it is perfectly clear that this is not Croce's meaning, for he says: 'Kant considered hardness, impenetrability, colour and the like to be the material of sensations.[4] But in so far as the spirit becomes aware of colour or hardness it has already given form to its sensations; sensations, considered as brute material, are outside the knowing spirit, they are a limit; colour, hardness, impenetrability and the like, so far as we are aware of them, are already intuitions, spiritually elaborated, rudimentary manifestations of the aesthetic activity.'

It is clear then that when we were told that what is intuited is individual character, and that this lake is an intuition, this meant that the *result* of the intuiting process is that this lake or something with individual physiognomy should be seen, fancied, or remembered. This will be of importance when we come to examine the identity of expression and intuition. At present we can consider with undivided minds Croce's answer to the question, What is that which receives form from the aesthetic activity?

4. It is something, he replies, that takes place in ourselves, yet of which we often become aware only by laborious effort;[5] we catch a glimpse of something, but we do not have it in objective form before our mind. It is this unknown something, assailing and

[1] *Estetica*, p. 8. [2] Ibid., p. 7: 'ciò che s'intuisce'. [3] Ibid., p. 27.

[4] Ibid., p. 319: 'materia delle sensazioni'. The German word I should have expected to be *Erscheinung*.

[5] Ibid., p. 8. What follows seems to be withdrawn in *Problemi*, pp. 481–3; but cf. below, p. 136, note 4.

transporting us as if from without, which is the matter or content that differentiates one intuition from another; it is something mechanical, passive, which we undergo but do not produce, which yet is the condition of all activity and knowledge. The form on the other hand, which is constant, is the spiritual activity of intuition or expression.

But this matter is further defined. It is sensations and impressions,[1] more or less complex states of mind. It is crude emotionality.[2] It is not an abstract concept, nor a philosphic universal, nor a perceived historical fact. It remains therefore that it must be appetite, propensity and will – that is to say, one of the infinite gradations of practical activity with its moments of pain and pleasure.[3] It is a state of *our own* passions.[4] It is a world desired or loathed, or mingled of desire and loathing.[5] It may be a desire, an aspiration or a yearning.[6] In slightly different words again we read that intuition only tells us what *as individuals* we experience, suffer or desire;[7] that the artist represents his affections;[8] and that what Schelling and Schopenhauer allowed of music, that it reproduces and objectifies no ideas but the ideal rhythm of the universe, that is to say, the will itself, is true of every art because it is the very essence of pure intuition.[9]

5. How then is this expression of our desires and aversions identified with intuition? An initial misunderstanding must here be guarded against. Intuition for Croce is not the same thing as perception.[10] In the language of Kant, it tells us nothing of the nature of objects and takes no interest in their existence; in that of Hegel, it deals solely with appearance, not illusion, but appearance where the distinction of logical truth and falsehood is not applied; in the words of Croce it reigns solely in the imagination, it does not classify its

[1] *Estetica*, p. 16. Unless by sensation we were to intend something already cognitive, in which case it would be intuition; *Logica*, p. 1.
[2] Ibid., p. 19.
[3] *Problemi*, p. 23.
[4] *Logica*, p. 154; cf. p. 139.
[5] *Pratica*, p. 187.
[6] Ibid., p. 206.
[7] *Logica*, p. 204; and cf. p. 106. The italics are mine.
[8] *Pratica*, p. 43.
[9] Ibid., p. 188.
[10] Cf. p. 127, *supra*.

objects, it does not pronounce them real or imaginary, it does not qualify or define them, it feels and represents them.[1] The perception of a physical thing as such is not the artistic act, because it is not pure intuition but a perceptive judgement.[2] When art adopts a historical fact (or physical thing) it thereby deprives it of its historical character.[3] Art does not apply the criterion of reality, and the criterion of reality is identical with the distinction between desire and action, for desires are possibility, action is reality.[4]

6. This last statement brings us back to our main question, which now stands before us stripped of possible misinterpretations. The fundamental paradox of Croce's aesthetic and one of the cardinal points of his philosophy is the identification of intuition with expression. How can the expression of my desires and volitions be identified with intuition in general? That it should be the same thing as the intuition of my desires and volitions may be accepted. But Croce's contention is clear that to be distinctly aware of any coherently individual shape, sound, colour or other sensible object, whether this turn out to be real, remembered or imaginary, is the same thing as to have become distinctly aware of *my own*[5] states of repulsion and attraction, whether these turn out to have been mere desires or actual volitions. If we fail to understand this identification it is not for lack of exposition. Art, we are told, is knowledge, not abstract but concrete, knowledge which accepts the real[6] without alteration or falsification, and therefore intuition. If we imagine a hypothetical man awaking for the first moment to the theoretic life, with a mind still unburdened by any abstraction or reflection, he would be, for that purely intuitive moment, necessarily a poet; he would lose himself in an ingenuous and wondering contemplation of the world. Unless we split up the unity of the spirit into a soul and body it is impossible to believe in a pure act of soul – that is to say, in an intuition which exists without its proper body which is

[1] *Problemi*, pp. 14, 15.
[2] Ibid., p. 26.
[3] *Pratica*, p. 186.
[4] Ibid., p. 185.
[5] Cf. the passage quoted above (p. 129) from *Logica*, pp. 154, 204.
[6] That is, of course, for Croce, states of mind.

expression.[1] If anything were ever originally intuited except as the expression of our sentiments it could never become that expression, it could only by an intellectual act of connexion become symbolical of them, and we should have to fall into the psychological doctrines of *Einfühlung* or empathy.[2] A landscape is a state of mind.[3] The imagination – as opposed to a mere arbitrary fancy which for some purpose of our own mechanically connects ideas – is the translation of practical values into theoretic, of states of mind into imagery. A mental image which is not the expression of a state of mind is not an image.[4] But it may be objected, Croce continues, that if I open my eyes and catch sight of a table or a mountain, surely I have not thereby completed the aesthetic act. To this he replies with the distinction already quoted between intuition and perception.[5] Only on one hypothesis could there be a pure[6] intuition of a physical object, namely, if physical or external nature were a metaphysical, an ultimate reality and not already a construction or abstraction of the intellect. On this hypothesis man in his first moment of cognition would intuit equally himself and the external world. But this, he goes on, is the hypothesis of dualism, which allows neither a coherent philosophy nor a coherent aesthetic. If it be granted we must abandon indeed the theory of art as pure intuition, but with it all philosophy. No theoretic function is possible without the mental reconstruction of reality. A supposed pure sensation is really an intuition – is really an ideal creation of reality. If knowledge is not the making or remaking of that which the spirit itself has already produced, we are brought back to dualism with all its resulting absurdities.[7]

[1] *Problemi*, pp. 15, 16. Croce means, I think, that we are aware of nothing without also being emotionally affected. The object of our knowledge might then express to us our emotions.

[2] Paraphrased from *Problemi*, p. 21.

[3] Ibid., p. 24.

[4] Ibid., p. 25. I have translated the Italian *fantasia* 'imagination' and *immaginazione* 'fancy', in accordance with the English use established by Coleridge. For Croce every state of mind except desire and will either is or presupposes expression.

[5] *Supra*, pp. 129–30; *Problemi*, p. 26.

[6] I.e., not containing judgement.

[7] *Problemi*, p. 486. Reality is acts of will. This is *remade* by knowledge as the world.

The assumption of this whole philosophy is clear; it is that the object does not exist unless it is known, that it is not separable from the knowing spirit[1] and indeed the individual spirit. In criticism of this doctrine I do not propose to raise the whole question of idealism.[2] Fortunately, the particular question before us need not await the final solution of that problem. It will be enough for the purposes of criticism if we can show that Croce's idealistic system fails to establish the coherent aesthetic which he claims as possible for it alone. Such a result would on his own showing remove one presumption against the realists, and they may be left to avail themselves of it should it seem worthy their attention.

But before attempting to indicate what seems to me to be the inconsistency of his view, it is necessary to notice some other of its aspects. It is evident that for him the objects to which we attribute beauty cannot be regarded as existing independently of the mind[3] which perceives, or rather creates them, any more than can beauty itself. In what sense then can there be any possible communication of our aesthetic experience, or any distinction of its genuine occurrence from the most arbitrary and capricious play of fancy?

7. As regards the last point, Croce, as we have just seen,[4] distinguishes the true artistic intuition from the constructions of the rhetorical fancy – the voluntary intrusion of the artist's own purposes which must be considered rather as a practical than a theoretic activity. Nothing is more alien or repugnant to poetry than the artificial fancy, just because nothing is more alien and repugnant to reality. Its combinations not only are not poetry but are empty of any real spiritual content.[5] What the poet imagines cannot be absurd or contradictory, but must be founded in the reality of life, and in the nature of things.[6] Poetry is true; it is only philosophically

[1] *Logica*, p. 120.

[2] Cf. Joachim, *The Nature of Truth*, and Prichard, *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*, especially chs. iv and vi; and Laird, *A Study in Realism*.

[3] Yet when he is arguing against the existence of beauty as a physical quality (*Estetica*, xiv) it is hard, in spite of his disclaimer (xiii), to avoid feeling that he implies at least a comparative reality for physical objects.

[4] *Supra*, p. 131; *Problemi*, pp. 25, 19.

[5] *Logica*, p. 186.

[6] *Pratica*, p. 232.

false, only, that is to say, when it is falsified by being offered or taken as philosophy.[1]

8. Moreover, this artistic truth can be communicated. By study of his life and society I can so put myself at the artist's point of view that the physical colours, shapes and sounds – or written signs of those sounds – by which he has communicated his vision may stimulate me to the same intuition which he experienced. The life that has been lived, the feeling that has been felt, the act that has been willed, certainly cannot be reproduced, for no fact can take place more than once, and my situation of this moment is no other person's, and indeed is not my own of a moment later or a moment before. But art recreates ideally and expresses my momentary situation; and the image it produces, free from time and space, can be again created and contemplated in its ideal reality from any point of space or time.[2] The great artists reveal us to ourselves because their imagination is identical with our own, and the difference between us is merely one of degree.[3] The expressive activity, just because it is spiritual activity, is not capricious but necessary. If a work admired by its maker is condemned by the critics, or if these pronounce perfect one which the artist had discarded as a failure, that can only mean that one of the two parties is in error, and has failed to pronounce upon the purely aesthetic fact.[4] But undoubtedly we often succeed in recovering, on the stimulus of some communication, the state of mind in which it was produced; and on no other terms would be possible the social life, which is communion with our fellows, or the individual life, which is communion with our past selves.[5] We can identify our spirits with that of the artist, repeating

[1] *Pratica*, p. 243; *Estetica*, p. 179. *Jean Christophe* (vol. iv, p. 29, Romain Rolland) indeed thought 'que le pire fausseté de l'art Allemand n'était pas quand ses artistes voulaient exprimer des sentiments qu'ils ne sentaient point, mais bien plutôt quand ils voulaient exprimer des sentiments qu'ils sentaient – *et qui étaient faux*'. But this was partly a self-deception of the masters whose feeling was not really real or not really mastered in expression (*incapacité à se voir soi-même, à oser se voir en face*), partly a natural want of sympathy in himself (*tout nier que l'on n'a pas reconnu vrai par soi-même*), partly that he took, perhaps because they offered, these feelings as an edifying ideal (*en adoration devant sa propre image*).

[2] *Problemi*, p. 27.

[3] *Estetica*, p. 18.

[4] Ibid., p. 138. Perhaps, e.g., he has praised it or condemned it for its moral.

[5] Ibid., p. 145. Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, 481.

in ourselves his work, and adding no single touch of our own.[1] Since we have experienced, to some extent, the various actions and feelings described by the poet, we can reconstruct them all in ourselves as we contemplate his work of art.[2] If we deny truth and communicability to intuition we cannot maintain it in knowledge or morality, which are erected on no other basis.[3]

9. It seems convenient here, before proceeding to consider some less startling aspects of the *Estetica*, to consider this identification of intuition and expression. The theory is that an intuition may be such a thing as this table, or this river, seen, imagined or remembered. This is the expression of a crude matter of which we otherwise have no distinct knowledge but which can be generally characterized as desire, aversion, emotion, though we most often give those names to the matter which has already become clear to us by expression. To this matter form is given, rendering it object of knowledge, by the aesthetic, intuiting or expressing activity. The result is always beautiful, since ugliness resides simply in a more or less complete failure to express,[4] and the activity is in all cases identical; so that the difference between one completed intuition and another depends on a difference in the crude matter to which form is given. The difference, then, between this table and this river, as I experience them prior to any act of judgement or of abstraction, depends entirely on a difference in those emotional states of myself which immediately preceded either experience.

10. If we asked how then do we know our emotions otherwise than as such things as this table or this river? we might be answered that in some cases the crude matter of emotion is expressed as this internal cry of despair, in others as 'the vision of this table',[5] and if we ask why originals sufficiently similar to be called emotions should receive such different expressions as are afterwards classified as a cry

[1] *Logica*, p. 219. [2] *Pratica*, p. 149.

[3] *Estetica*, p. 142. This paragraph is quoted almost directly from the passages referred to.

[4] *Problemi*, p. 232; *Logica*, pp. 67–72; *Pratica*, pp. 43, 140–2. Such failure arises from a misplaced intrusion of the logical or practical activity into the aesthetic. The mechanical juxtaposition of incoherent expressions is only a case of the latter error.

[5] Or 'this vision of a table' or 'this vision of this table'.

of despair and a vision of a table – where the different use of the preposition '*of*' suggests a different relation of the cry and the vision to our emotions – we shall be referred to the *Synthesis a priori*.[1] For previous to this synthesis and the scientific classification into 'pseudoconcepts' which depends upon it, our knowledge is said to be simply of our own 'mental images'. We know neither natural things, which metaphysically do not exist, nor our crude volitions, which, as I understand, do; all our images are expressions of the latter. When the sound of a fog-horn bursts upon my ears, that sound, prior to mental construction and abstraction, is an expression, and nothing else than an expression, of my emotional state, in just the same sense as is my own silently formulated oath or chuckle. If its 'individual physiognomy' is clearly intuited, it will, always previous to abstraction, be, in its little way, beautiful.[2]

11. But without dwelling on the difficulties involved in such an account of knowledge, I prefer to ask simply whether Croce has succeeded in making it consistent with that admission of 'truth' and communicability in our intuitions without which his *Estetica* must have been at once rejected as a description of our aesthetic experience.[3] Croce's account of the communication of an aesthetic experience is shortly as follows:[4] A person A seeks the expression E for an impression I,[5] of which he is dimly aware, but which he has not yet expressed. He tries various words and phrases, to take a linguistic example, but rejects them as improper, inadequate and ugly. He sees nothing or nothing clearly. After other vain attempts, now approaching now receding from his goal, he suddenly attains the desired expression E and *lux facta est*. The ugly with the displeasure attached to it was the aesthetic activity which failed to overcome

[1] See *supra*, pp. 129–31.

[2] Croce certainly seems to mention intuitions which are not expressive (*Estetica*, pp. 20, 21). Probably he here means perceptions. But an intuition must precede perception.

[3] Such an argument, at least alongside a more philosophical deduction, is admitted to be necessary by Croce (*Pratica*, p. 219).

[4] *Estetica*, p. 137.

[5] Not only does Croce, like Hume, intend to use the word 'impression' without implying anything as to the existence of an external impressing cause, but he seems to mean by it simply the same as volition or desire. This is confusing.

its obstacle; the beautiful is the expressive activity which is triumphant.[1] A may now choose to fashion in the external physical world some material sign S, by way of shapes, colours, sounds and the like, designed to stimulate in himself or others a repetition of this expressive activity. If now another person *a* has to criticize the expression E and decide upon its beauty or ugliness, he can only put himself at the point of view of A and by the help of the impression *i* made on him by the physical sign S reconstruct the process E as *e*. The original process of A is I E S. In *a*'s mind it should become *i* (= S), *e*, where S (= *i*) stands to *a* and *e* exactly as I (or its cause) did to A and E.[2] But how can *a* possibly become aware of S even if S can exist? It is 'only on a dualistic hypothesis' that S exists except as someone's mental image or construction. In order that it should become *a*'s mental image or – since such language has no meaning – that *a* should have any intuition whatever, he must express his own emotional states, for there is no intuition without expression and no expression without a matter to be expressed.[3] And it is this matter which alone differentiates one intuition from another. If we try to state the whole process, *a* has a volitional state *i* stimulated by S. This he intuits or expresses as *e*; but the quality of *e* cannot be inferred from the quality of *i* or S, for 'from the quality of the content to that of the form there is no inference'.[4] The necessary condition of *a*'s expression being identical with A's is not only, Croce supposes, that *a* and A should have an identical faculty of expression, but also that they should have an identical impressibility

[1] This account should apply to all intuition of 'individual physiognomy' so far as uncontaminated by abstraction; that of hearing an explosion, watching a sunrise, or remembering or imagining either.

[2] Cf. *Estetica*, p. 112. [3] *Logica*, p. 120.

[4] *Estetica*, p. 19. This is a difficulty for communication by itself. In *Problemi* (p. 481) it is indeed denied that any such matter really exists as had been stated in *Estetica* (p. 8) to be the condition of all activity. But it is still repeated that this non-existent matter is what differentiates one intuition from another. And I do not see how Croce can maintain that our volitions (which are this matter) do not exist; though, till expressed, they may not be known. For according to him they *are* reality (*Pratica*, p. 205). I cannot understand how there can be no inference (*passaggio*) from quality of content to quality of form if what distinguishes one work of art from another is its matter or content. If we accept the 'explicit declaration' that the matter expressed (in this case *i*) does not exist, then what was the good of S and what is communicated to *a*?

towards external reality. It is no good for the purposes of communication that *a* should express his emotion *i* by the same activity with which A had expressed his I unless *i* is the same as I; that is to say, unless the sign S stimulates in *a* the same crude emotion which A had expressed as E. But to admit this would be to sacrifice the thoroughgoing identity of expression and intuition which Croce, wrongly as I believe, holds to be absolutely essential to his doctrine. For this impressibility to external stimulus prior to expression is just what he excludes from spiritual activity under the name of blind passivity and mechanism. It is as impossible on Croce's theory for a picture as for any other physical fact to have a proper character which can suggest to us our aesthetic activity. The spectator (*a*) simply creates the picture in expressing his own emotionality.

If we place alongside the description just quoted of *a*'s treatment of the external sign S[1] the passage[2] where Croce denies the possibility of any intuition of external or physical nature except on the 'dualistic theory which is the suicide of philosophy', we seem forced to conclude that he must abandon either his identification of intuition and expression or his belief in the communicability of aesthetic experience. Indeed, to believe in the existence of other minds with whom we might communicate is really for this theory a leap in the dark as indefensible as to believe in external objects, and for the same reason: that 'man knows only what he makes' and 'if knowledge is not the construction or reconstruction of what the spirit has itself produced, we return to dualism, to the thing over against the thinker,'[3] in a word, to the theory of knowledge as a mirror.

12. How, on Croce's system, can the existence of the sign S – a picture, for instance – be explained as anything but *a*'s (the spectator's) 'mental image'? The criterion of reality, which of course is only applied subsequently to the aesthetic intuition, is the distinction

[1] *Estetica*, p. 138.

[2] *Problemi*, p. 26, cited *supra*, p. 131. The passage continues: 'Those who suppose two forms of intuition, one objective or physical, the other subjective or aesthetic . . . one impressed from without, the other arising from the depths of the soul . . . offer but a vulgar aesthetic.'

[3] Ibid., p. 486. If Croce means that I can only apprehend that which is the work of a spirit akin to my own, I might agree. But it need not be *my* work; and this leaves 'the thing over against the thinker', as indeed would my own past work.

between mere desire and actual volition. Now if those desires and volitions are held to be those of *a*, we shall have no medium of communication between him and A, for the reality of the picture depends on *a* having willed and its nature on what he willed. But if the reality of the picture depends on A having willed and expressed his will (whereas if he had merely desired it would have remained his imaginary picture), then there are realities depending on some individual (A) having willed, which are independent of another individual (*a*) willing. Again if *a* cannot intuit such a reality, though it exists, without himself willing or desiring, there is no communication, for what he intuits will depend on what he himself has willed, not on what A willed and expressed.[1]

The only escape seems to be to suppose that the existence of the picture S depends on A having willed. So all acts of *will* are not only intuited or expressed, but in some way externalized, and either they are intuitable by another without expression of his own states, or, since the nature of physical things is to be expressions of acts of will, we never really intuit them unless we happen to be able therein to express our own acts of will.

13. But trees or stones have just as good a claim to independent existence as pictures. So Croce would have to admit that these too, in so far as we intuit them, are expressions of some will, which is not our own – for if it were our own they would not be external to us as a picture is – and that they are really intuitable in their own individual nature because they are expressions of acts of will which are like our own. That is to say, we only really intuit a picture, a tree, or a stone, when in its intuition we can express our own volitional state because it was made – and really made – to express volitional states of a like nature.

But this doctrine, something like that which Coleridge believed,[2]

[1] *Logica*, pp. 154, 204.

[2] *Letters*, ii. 450 (January 1804): Imagination is 'a *dim analogue* of creation'. Cf. Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: The poet is 'a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them'. Cf. pp. 65-6, *supra*.

and that which Kant held we must 'think but not believe', is for Croce exactly the backsliding from an expressional to a mystical or romantic aesthetic, or to the false psychology of *Einfühlung*.

## II. THE KINDS

### '*Et surtout ne parlons pas littérature*'

1. Many important contributions to the theory of beauty are furnished by Croce which do not depend on his identification of expression and intuition. The most striking of these is his complete effacement from the pages of philosophy of all those classifications and divisions which have played so large a part in aesthetic, and often reduced it to the level of literary chatter. The true definition of pastoral and of the heroic poem; the delimitation of painting and poetry; the proper distinction of beauty and sublimity, of symbolism, classicism, and romance, of realism and idealism; the difference between art and nature, or between tragedy and comedy, on these and on even subtler kinds, such as the humorous, the serio-comic and the grand style, has been spent almost as much acumen as upon the fine shades of ὑπόστασις and οὐσία[1] and with as little conclusion, though with not less interesting by-products upon the way.

Nothing has so stultified criticism and appreciation as the supposed necessity of first determining the genus and species of a beauty. To ask in face of a work of art whether it is a religious painting or a portrait, a problem play or a melodrama, post-cubist or pre-futurist, is as ingenuous a confession of aesthetic bankruptcy as to demand its title or its subject. The true motive of such a quest has always been the discovery of rules and canons which shall save us the trouble of a candid impression; for without rules there are no kinds and without kinds no rules. The result has always been sterility and dullness.[2] '*Tous les genres sont bons, hors le genre ennuyeux.*'

[1] The special character and the general nature. See the *Athanasian Creed*.

[2] It is the argumentative chatter about 'kinds' and their rules – what makes a tragic hero, or what licence may be allowed in a sonata – which really justifies the irony of Plato (*Prot.*, 367): 'Discussions about poetry remind me of the dinner-parties of dull and trivial people, who because they are too ignorant to entertain one another over

But once it be granted that beauty is expression, and that every feeling of the human spirit may be expressed, it is clear that a philosophical classification of beauties is a forlorn hope. Psychology itself would decline the task of distinguishing love from desire, reverence and affection, or solemnity from gloom and grandeur, as common sense retires before the definition of a gentleman or a prig. And though the physiological differences of our organs may be more exact, they are in the same proportion more misleading; for there can be a more important resemblance between *Aucassin* and the *Primavera* than between the *Primavera* and *Las Meniñas*.[1] 'Every individual and every moment in the spiritual life of an individual has its own artistic world, and these worlds are artistically incomparable.'[2] 'More has been contributed to the philosophy of art by the semi-poetical phrases of the romanticists, that architecture is frozen music, poetry speaking painting, or music the architecture of sounds, than by the pedantic distinctions of the compilers.'

2. These are all empirical and practical devices for convenience, aids to memory, which may facilitate, some more and others less, the indication and recovery of the individual which is our aim.[3] One of the most reverend of them, the Sublime, will be examined with

---

their wine with their own voices and their own ideas, increase the demand for singers and dancers.'

Cf. Coleridge: 'What rule is there which does not leave the reader still at the poet's mercy and the poet at his own?' 'Could a rule be given from without, poetry would cease to be poetry and sink into a mechanical art' (*B.L.*, p. 207).

And Anatole France (*Pierre Nozière*, p. 146): 'Ceux-la furent des cuistres qui prétendirent donner des règles pour écrire, comme si'l y avait d'autres règles pour cela que l'usage, le goût et les passions, nos vertus et nos vices. . . . Notre langue c'est notre mère et notre nourrice, il faut boire à même. Les grammaires sont des biberons. Et Vergile a dit que les enfants nourris au biberon ne sont dignes ni de la table des dieux ni du lit des déesses.'

A musician's contempt for such classifications as applied to music is expressed by E. Gurney, *The Power of Sound*, p. 100.

[1] Lessing does not make his distinction very convincing in the *Laocoön*. It would be even less so with a less academic restriction to 'classical' art, or a wider knowledge of that than he could possess. He clearly thinks the most important element in a picture to be its 'subject'.

[2] *Estetica*, xii, and pp. 156, 396–401; *Problemi*, pp. 275–94, 227; *Pratica*, p. 298; cf. V. Hugo, Preface to *Les Orientales*.

[3] Cf. Addison on 'Milton' (*Spectator*, No. 267): 'Those who dispute if *Paradise Lost* be a Heroick poem say no more than that Adam is not Aeneas.'

some detail in another place,[1] and the conclusion there reached may be generalized. What essence of truth some of these distinctions seem obstinately to retain under our criticism is really this: that we have elevated into distinct forms of beauty elements truly present in every beautiful individual; abstract moments of the concrete work of art. In every experience of beauty there must be present, with infinitely various degrees of emphasis, the romantic or lyric or Dionysiac moment of passion and the classical or epic or Apolline moment of form and expression;[2] – the effort, at first unsuccessful, which, when it is conspicuous, gives rise to what is called sublime, and the triumph which, when it is easy, makes us forget the struggle in what is called beauty. Every work of art is lyrical because it expresses the emotion of the artist; epic or plastic, because it expresses this in sensible form; dramatic because it expresses the individual moment of feeling in a unity that can be analyzed into multiplicity, in an interplay of parts.[3]

3. Where this hypostatization of moments is not our excuse no distinctions of beauty will resist criticism better than that between handsome and pretty, that of the dealer's catalogue between important and curious works of art, or that of the guide-books between 'romantically agreeable' and 'wild but varied'. Yet it is to be wished that Croce had given us more help in applying this solution to the most recalcitrant problem of comedy. It is not easy to convince others, it is not always possible to be convinced that the individual cases of amusement do not demand a special principle, really universal, to distinguish them from other aesthetic experiences. It is the obvious failure of the ingenuity even of Lipps[4] or Bergson[5] to attain such an intelligible unity which leaves us com-

[1] Chap. IX. [2] Chap. VI.

[3] *Problemi*, p. 20. Cf. Lamb, *Genius of Hogarth*, quoted with approval by Wordsworth: 'Imagination, which draws all things to one; which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour, and serve one effect.'

[4] *Komik und Humor*.

[5] *Le Rire*; he defines comedy as mechanism plastered upon life. Mr A. C. Bradley in his essay on Falstaff (*Oxford Lectures*) has probably done all that can be done to enlighten us on the nature of humour, abstaining from any attempt to define or distinguish it. It should be noticed that not for Croce's theory alone would the ridiculous be a stumbling-block. No aesthetic system has disposed of it.

pelled to rest provisionally in the belief of its impossibility; a scepticism not without encouragement from the psychologists themselves. 'The great difficulty of the problem of the comic is that different theorists have all tried to discover a single cause of laughter. Now it appears to us infinitely likely that there is no single cause.'[1]

It may at least be said with conviction that what amuses us most is least purely ludicrous; that the ridiculous is not one step from the sublime; that integral comedy is not a relief but a heightening of the tragedy whereby it is itself no less heightened; that the charm of children is not distinguishable from their funniness; that dignity is always a little laughable, and absurdity pathetic; and that not only does the same artist produce both tragedy and comedy[2] but he may boast:

> *Deus sum; commutavero*
> *Eandem hanc, si voltis; faciam ego ex tragoedia*
> *Comoedia ut sit:* omnibus isdem versibus.[3]

[I am a god. To please you I can change this very tragedy to comedy without altering a line.]

The attempt to distinguish Wit from Beauty has produced all those tedious questionings, in the last age whether Donne, in our own whether Pope, should be held to have written poetry.

If it be objected that nothing is amusing but humanity or its analogies, that is only less obviously true of what is beautiful. Before a mountain, as before a pretty person, the unsophisticated expression is a smile. Hatred naturally expresses itself in the grin of satire, and embarrassment, which is a kind of fear, in a giggle. No definition of tragedy which is not circular has succeeded in excluding comedy.

If all this cannot be held, as I do not think it can, to prove conclusively that there is no distinction possible between the beautiful

[1] Basch, *L'Esthétique de Kant*, p. 600. I think it is clear that some psychological works on the subject confuse the problem of defining comedy with the question why when amused – and at other times – we often laugh. Curiously I have not noticed that the philosophy of tragedy has been confused with the investigation why pain, grief, and other emotions distil tears.

[2] Plato, *Symposium*, 223.

[3] Plautus, *Amphit.*, Prologue.

and the comic, though none rigorously tenable has been found, it at least convinces us that there is no object or objective act or situation comic in itself. Nothing is a fit or an unfit subject for humour any more than for tragedy. Heaven and hell, love and death and birth are all tragic and all humorous, and perhaps seem most to be either when seen to be both.[1]

In general then, as Croce says, the philosophy of art must be formal,[2] elucidating not the many hypothetical or material maxims[3] which depend upon the conditions of more or less similar situations, but the universal categorical imperative of beauty. It seemed likely that the most useful method of supporting this conclusion would be a detailed examination of the two most famous distinctions, that between beauty and sublimity and that between formal and expressive beauty.[4]

## III. THE SUBJECT

*παλαιά τις διαφορὰ φιλοσοφίᾳ τε καὶ ποιητικῇ*

[There is an old quarrel between poetry and philosophy.]

1. The most popular objection to Croce's *Estetica* is that if beauty be simply expression it seems a small thing. The expression of the commonest impulse seems to be put upon a level with *Hamlet* or the *Divine Comedy*. Surely, it will be said, what differentiates these things is the profound philosophic truth, the lofty moral vision, the importance of the subject. It is true that one way in which the individual play called *Hamlet* differs from another called *The Way of the World* is that in it, or rather from it, we may abstract philosophical thought and moral reflection. In other words, it would not have been written, and could not be wholly appreciated, by anyone who had not thought and purposed well. This is also true of some very poor plays. What makes it a work of art is that it is the perfect expression of emotions; but that these emotions should be such as could not exist except in a thoughtful or an educated man makes it a different but not necessarily a better work. Strictly speaking,

[1] See Appendix A.
[2] *Pratica*, p. 298
[3] *Breviario di Estetica*, p. 73.
[4] Chaps. IX and X.

there is no philosophy *in* the *Divine Comedy* or *Paradise Lost*; the moment that we ask if any single statement there propounded is logically true we have ceased – for the moment – to treat them as works of art. And conversely the moment that we cease to ask if a Platonic myth or a phrase of Nietzsche is true, the moment that we delight in them for their dramatic or lyrical expressiveness of possible human emotion, we have ceased – for the moment – to treat them as philosophy.

2. When Christina Rossetti erased from her copy of *Atalanta in Calydon* that great lyrical ending, 'The ultimate evil, God,' she was in error, for the sentiment is 'decent' – that is to say, appropriate to its context; it is the expression of a human sentiment possible, and indeed necessary, in the mouth of the speakers in the particular situation which the poet's imagination has created. It is as little blasphemous as the Psalmist's statement that 'The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God.'[1] If a friendship for the writer were ground for supposing that it laid claim to philosophic truth, this only shows how easily the artist is mistaken for a prophet in his own country; for on this count at least Swinburne does not deserve to be censured as a preacher. That he often does may be admitted, for perhaps no work of art is pure art, as certainly no work on philosophy exists which does not express some feeling and which has not therefore its literary aspect.[2] 'Only practically and approximately can we say that this book is poetry and that other is philosophy.' But just as Croce holds that, though perhaps no human act can be quite unmoral, and certainly no act however moral can be quite free from interest, yet we clearly distinguish the moral from the 'economic' element in conduct, so he shows that we quite naturally criticize art from a purely artistic point of view and philosophy from one philosophic. Error, for him, just consists in the confusion of criteria,[3] in approving Milton's verse as edifying, or Shelley's politics as beautiful, Plato's philosophy as charming, or Schopenhauer's ro-

[1] This would be equally true if the chorus were an 'undramatic' lyric. The distinction between lyric and drama is, of course, not ultimately tenable; all lyrics are dramatic and all dramas lyrical.

[2] *Estetica*, pp. 12, 29–31, and especially *Logica*, pp. 56, 57.

[3] *Logica*, p. 275.

mance as true. 'By the law of the unity of the spirit all its forms are implicit in each, but each is explicitly itself and not the others; it absorbs and transforms the results of the others. The power of each lies exactly in this purity which affirms itself even in the greatest complexity.'[1]

'The artist who substitutes for a representation of his affections an argument about his affections . . . commits the artistic error – that is to say, ugliness.'[2] Ugliness in art is the intrusion of a practical activity; a moral or *im*moral intention, standing where it ought not.[3] It was after all a true instinct in Moslem, Jewish and Christian iconoclasts which often surprises us by mistrusting art not because it is profane or trivial but just so far as, leaving the sphere of obvious fiction, it becomes the handmaid of religious truth. Plato and all who are in the best sense puritans, know that to discover the beauty of holiness no more implies holiness than, conversely, to bow down and worship a sacred image implies any appreciation of its beauty.

A poem then may in one sense be full of morality or of wickedness, a picture of philosophy or scepticism, a cathedral of religious truth or falsehood, but in a sense they care for none of these things;[4] they affirm none but only express our feelings about them, and in so doing they are beautiful just as is the expression of simplest passion.[5]

3. In what sense it remains possible to speak of degrees of beauty is still a hard question. Croce holds that there is no expression except perfect expression, that it is therefore in every case equally expressive or beautiful. And since every work of art, whether epic or lyrical, is individual, it might seem that one cannot be held to contain more beauties or expressions than another, since each is one only. But this clearly requires modification. There is no reason why what is in one aspect an individual may not from another be divided

[1] *Logica*, pp. 177, 178.
[2] *Pratica*, p. 43.
[3] *Logica*, pp. 67–9; *Pratica*, p. 142.
[4] *Estetica*, p. 5.
[5] A. C. Bradley, 'Poetry for Poetry's Sake', in *Oxford Lectures*, p. 7: 'Shakespeare's knowledge or his moral insight, Milton's greatness of soul, Shelley's "hate of hate" and "love of love", and that desire to help men or make them better which may have influenced a poet in hours of meditation – all these have as such no poetical worth; they have that worth only when, passing through the unity of the poet's being, they reappear as qualities of imagination, and then are indeed mighty powers in the world of poetry.'

into different individuals, as an organism into cells. Prince Hamlet is an individual, but not more so than the play or the play within the play, and not less so than any one of his acts or visions. If five books of the *Odyssey* or two movements from the Ninth Symphony alone survived they would be beautiful, and we cannot be certain because the Melian Aphrodite and the Abbey at Tintern are quite beautiful as fragments that the lost parts may not have combined with them in beautiful, and even more beautiful, wholes. The beauty of a whole is not the sum of the beauties of parts into which it may be divided, yet it is often, I think, a greater beauty, not merely different.

4. Croce admits[1] a 'difference of extension' between such expressive acts as a single word and a novel, apparently because the latter expresses a more complex state of mind; and this is not in contradiction to his insistence in the same passage on the identical nature of both as expressive. Perhaps Shakespeare's line 'Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang' is more purely beautiful, if less extensive, than the whole sonnet. For in just the same way the simplest judgement of memory and the most comprehensive metaphysic are, if true, true; yet the one is a greater truth than the other. And though this concession seems hard to harmonize with his approval of Schleiermacher's [2] contention that the greatest and most complicated picture and the smallest arabesque are, if each is perfect in its own way, absolutely equal, yet it is a concession which the artistic experience rightly demands to account for such a possible deliverance as that *Measure for Measure* is greater, *as a work of art*, than Mariana's song by itself.

5. But besides admitting that expressions, each perfect, may differ in some kind of extension or comprehension which is not merely quantitative, or at least not measurable, it is possible to suggest that there may be degrees of expression. That is to say, that Keats' revised draft of *Hyperion* may be actually a better expression, of the very same feeling, than his first,[3] which was yet beautiful though less so. This is no doubt a difficult metaphysical conception when stated

[1] *Estetica*, pp. 16, 17. [2] Ibid., pp. 369, 371.

[3] *Facsimile of Hyperion* (edited by E. de Sélincourt). I do not, of course, refer to the two poems which were published.

in these terms, though the analogies of truth and morality seem in its favour; at any rate it is rejected by Croce, who assumes that expression is either perfect or not expression, and that if we speak of an imperfect work of art that only means that while parts of it are perfect expressions these are not fused into that expressive whole in which they should be lost. But it is not easy to see why this atomic view is the only possible one, since the artistic activity is not the aiming at a clearly seen goal which must be hit or missed,[1] nor the realizing of a plan first conceived in the abstract,[2] but a spiritual creation whose material only becomes revealed in the result.[3] This Croce seems to come near recognizing in a passage already quoted[4] where he says that the man who seeks an expression tries now one set of words and then another, approaching and again losing sight of success till *suddenly* he achieves the desired expression. But if one of these sets of words was nearer the mark than another, there must be degrees of expression, that is, of beauty, or at least, what is the same[5] for our present purpose, there must be degrees of that inexpressiveness which is ugliness. But Croce rejects this alternative as being a form of the error which distinguishes between different works of art with the same subject – a subject which then must be known otherwise than in the work of art; – the error which admits of translations, and criticizes every poem by the standard of some other, if not by that of prose. But we are again faced by the dilemma: either Croce must admit degrees of expression or sacrifice his identity of intuition and expression. Otherwise we could never become aware of anything ugly, for ugliness has been defined as the inexpressive and intuition as expression. If he were to reply that what we call ugly or indifferent is only so relatively, and would be called beautiful if it were not overshadowed by its context, that would admit degrees of beauty.

6. There is a third way in which beauties may be compared aesthetically besides the two already suggested of degree of expres-

[1] *Estetica*, p. 59. [2] *Pratica*, p. 54.

[3] Bosanquet, 'The Nature of Aesthetic Emotion', *Mind*, vol. iii (N.S.), No. 10.

[4] *Estetica*, p. 137.

[5] I cannot see the reality of the distinction which Croce alleges (*Estetica*, p. 91) between degrees of ugliness as possible and degrees of beauty as absurd.

siveness and extent. This may be called depth, and will be described more fully in the chapter dealing with sublimity. Here it must be enough to say that those beauties have greatest depth where there are fused in an individually expressive whole the most elements which, had they existed independently, would have seemed most recalcitrant to expression. Before the completion of the process which ends in grasping the indiscerptible beauty, these elements were recognized separately as in some degree ugly, and the triumph of their conquest is correspondingly great. (See Appendix B.)

Wordsworth and Croce both held that what the aesthetic experience expresses is emotion recognized in tranquillity. Both for some reason said less about music than about other arts. I have done so from ignorance. Mr F. Howes[1] from experience has done the opposite. He holds, with Mrs Lange[2] that what the 'significant form' of Clive Bell and Roger Fry signifies is 'a *tonal* analogue of emotional life' which cannot be signified by the spoken word. But Shelley's *Hymn of Pan* is also an audible expression of emotional life by sounds not replaceable by other sounds. The Medici Tombs signify by shapes an emotional life not expressible by any sounds, or by other shapes.

For further elucidation of Croce's difficult position there may be consulted his three essays which I have translated (from *My Philosophy by B. Croce*), since writing the above. They are *Morals and Politics*, *Art as the Form of Pure Knowledge* and *Aesthetics and Economics*.

[1] *Music and Meaning*, 1958. [2] *Form and Feeling*.

CHAPTER IX

# The Sublime[1]

1. The philosophy of sublimity is respectable in bulk but ambiguous in subject. 2. The significance of the term to the Romantics was derived from Kant. 3. The Kantian theory and its sources. 4. The division of sublimity into Mathematical and Dynamic. 5. Some reasons for errors of detail in this doctrine. 6. Its whole principle is vitiated by intellectual and ethical bias. 7. Hegel's theory. 8. Mr Bradley's theory. The beauty of powerful things causes first repulsion and then exultation. 9. But do such objects always cause such feelings? 10. And are such feelings caused only by such objects? 11. In Mr Bradley's own instance neither the object nor my feelings satisfy his requirements. 12. Repulsion, other than the aesthetic repulsion from what is ugly, is only caused by objects somehow hostile. 13. Sympathy, other than aesthetic, is only caused by objects somehow congenial. 14. Of both these kinds of objects the variety is infinite; as indeed is that of the suggested definitions of sublimity. 15. Can we still think that 'sublimity' has more value than other artistic kinds? 16. It indicates a beauty of things regarded (1) as uncongenial, (2) externally or extrinsically. 17. Different combinations of hostility and 'extrinsicness' produce infinite shades of sublimity. 18. The most convenient use of the term. 19. It indicates the prominence of an element present in all beauty – the *triumph* not of morality or reason but of beauty.

1. So much has been written about sublimity, so much genius has been devoted to its investigation, and so many illuminating things have been said by the way that courage is wanted, though no longer example, barely to deny its existence. For philosophy

[1] Some parts of this chapter, with considerable alterations, are reproduced from my article under the same title in *Mind* (vol. xix (N.S.), No. 75), by permission of the Editor.

can, like fiction, win credence for an original hypothesis by the concatenation of its deductions, so that all but the most heroic scepticism is bound to justify itself, and conciliate opponents, by what it must consider the irrelevant method of questioning the consequent.

'One is surprised that it should have been supposed for a moment that Longinus writes upon the sublime even in our vague and popular sense of the word. What is there in Sappho's ode that has any affinity with the sublimity of Ezekiel or Isaiah or even of Homer or Aeschylus? Longinus treats of animated, impassioned, energetic or, if you will, elevated writing; . . . *ὕψους* when translated sublimity deceives the English reader by substituting an etymology for a translation.' So wrote Wordsworth in 1825,[1] and De Quincey in 1839 was of the same opinion. 'The Grecians had apparently no word for it unless it was that which they meant by *τὸ σεμνόν* [solemn]: for *ὕψος* was a comprehensive expression for all qualities which give a character of life or animation to the composition.'[2] Ezekiel, Isaiah, Lucan and Milton are the authors he quotes as exhibiting the true quality.

On the other hand Payne Knight, who probably represents the view more usual among critics of the time, writes: 'The word *Sublime* both according to its use and etymology must signify *high* or *exalted*, and, if an individual choose that, in his writings, it should signify *terrible*, he only involves his meaning in a confusion of terms.'[3] On this ground he applies the term to 'the erotic compositions of Sappho, Theocritus and Otway'; and of Achilles he says: 'To the Trojans he was only terrible: to us he is only sublime; as we only sympathize with those prodigious energies of mind and body, which made him terrible to them.'

2. Wordsworth, we know, considered sublime the love of the

[1] *Letters of the Wordsworth Family* (edited by Knight), ii, p. 250.

[2] *Milton*, De Quincey's Works (Black, 1862), vi, p. 317. To Longinus is ascribed the *Περὶ ὕψους*, generally translated 'On the Sublime'.

[3] *Principles of Taste*, 3rd edition, 1806. Johnson holds that the expression of any strong passion is sublime. *Review of a Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.* But Knight cites Etna.

starving dog who watched three months by his dead master; almost certainly he would have accepted as typically sublime the scenery he describes in *The Recluse*:

> *Stern was the face of nature; we rejoiced*
> *In that stern countenance, for our souls thence drew*
> *A feeling of their strength.*

For Dorothy Wordsworth, who on such a point is not likely to have differed widely from her brother, describes the Fall of Reichenbach in the following manner: 'A tremendous one, but lacking all the minor graces which surround our waterfalls – overgrowings of lichen, moss, fern and flowers – it gives little of what may be called pleasure. It was astonishment and awe – an overwhelming sense of the powers of nature for the destruction of all things, and of the helplessness of man – of the weakness of his will if prompted to make a momentary effort against such a force.'[1] This well describes sublimity as it was understood by the circle of Coleridge and Wordsworth, though the former would perhaps characteristically have laid more emphasis on infinity of extension;[2] but how far genuine feeling is here expressed in a spontaneous form becomes doubtful when it is observed that the passage is almost quoted from Kant's *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*.[3] This may be seen by comparing an actual translation: 'It (the Sublime) is incompatible with charms; and as the mind is not merely attracted by the object, but continually in turn repelled, the satisfaction in the sublime does not so much contain positive pleasure as admiration or respect'; and 'The irresistibility of (nature's) might, while making us, as natural beings, aware of our own physical impotence, reveals a faculty of judging ourselves to be independent of nature and a superiority over nature.'

The Wordsworthian sublimity, then, may be identified with the Kantian. The sight of overwhelming natural force awakes in us a consciousness of moral strength comparable to the devotion of the

[1] *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth* (edited by Knight), ii, p. 209.

[2] *Letters of S. T. Coleridge* (edited by E. H. Coleridge), p. 228, and *Biographia Literaria* (edited by Shawcross), ii, 309.

[3] His doctrine of Sublimity is summarized on pp. 152–4, *infra*. The passages here translated are from §§ 23, 28.

dog in *Fidelity* or that with which the Hebrew prophets faced the exile, shame and destruction of their nation. Not being an academic formula but a living sensibility – only somewhat discoloured by theories – of great and poetical minds to the world, it does not confine itself to a pedantic consistency but shades off into other kinds of beauty; yet so far as the word has a clear meaning it is that of Kant, and claims to be opposed to earlier applications. Kant was certainly the first of the moderns to attempt so precise a definition; in no aesthetic philosophy probably has the idea taken so prominent a place. It would be useful to keep in mind four questions, of a historical kind, about Kant's Sublime.

First: How much of his account is carried on from predecessors, or how far is it the original conception which Wordsworth and Coleridge thought it?

Second: Why does he give sublimity so much prominence by treating it as a unity directly antithetical to beauty, these two constituting the whole domain of 'aesthetic judgement'?

Third: Why is the well-defined sublimity which he recognizes a sublimity in which there is no reconciliation? or, in other words: how is Kant able to consider the instances of sublimity he quotes as being irreconcilable to human will?

Fourth: Why has he two kinds of sublimity?

3. Kant, as has been shown, had confined pure beauty to inorganic patterns, or patterns not recognized as organic, which stimulate our perceptive faculties to an activity harmonious yet free. The so-called beauties of life, in nature or in art, were for him adulterated by concepts of use, type and perfection. Yet he was met by certain objects whose contemplation caused profound satisfaction of an apparently aesthetic kind, not, as it seemed, merely by their shape, but rather by their size or their power. For these he accepted,[1]

[1] *K. d. U.*, § 23 et seq. One of the earliest modern recognitions of sublimity is Thomas Burnet's account of the Alps (*Sacra Telluris Theoria*, t. ix, about 1680): 'Oculos meos atque animum nihil magis delectare solet, quam Oceanum intueri et magnos montes terrae. Nescio quid grande habent et augustum uterque horum, quo mens excitatur ad ingentes affectus et cognitationes . . . mentemque nostram, quae cum voluptate res magnas contemplatur, non esse rem parvam cum gaudio recognoscimus. Et quaecumque umbram infiniti habent . . . gratum quemdam stuporem animo

without criticism, the term sublime which had been adopted for popular philosophy by Boileau, Addison and Burke to represent the ὕψος of 'Longinus'; though it was used by them in very divergent senses, and by himself in his earlier work with quite vague and popular meaning.[1] The examples he gives are the traditional ones of these writers and a few derived from books of travel published in his middle age. Though he mentions St Peter's and the Pyramids, his doctrine is that nature alone is sublime.

4. Kant distinguishes Mathematical and Dynamic sublimity, corresponding roughly to the two senses in which the generic term had been used respectively by Addison and Burke.[2] The first is found in those objects which by their great size suggest infinity as the only proper standard of measurement. For infinity, by that very repugnance to our faculties of perception which depresses and confounds the spirit, yet puts us in mind of higher aptitudes adequate in their destiny, if not in their attainment, to the contemplation of infinity itself.

The dynamic sublime belongs to objects displaying irresistible force: tempests, the raging sea, boiling cataracts, overhanging and threatening precipices. Kant omits to refer here to any conception of infinite power, since this would not serve the useful purpose of confirming by cross-reference other parts of his system. Consequently we are baulked in our natural expectation of a faculty adequate to the comprehension of such an infinite force. It is our invincible freedom as moral beings of which we are reminded by the physical irresistibility of these tremendous forces. Whatever our own cowardice, however far the greatest hero has fallen short of an

affundunt. . . . Nihil hic elegans aut venustum sed ingens et magnificum'; and cf. Book IV, the beginning of the last chapter. Cf. Winckelmann, *Geschichte der bildenden Kunst*, Einleitung, xxiii, on the crushing yet elevating effect of ocean prospect.

[1] *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*. Here sublimity is divided into 'Shreckhaft, Edel, Prächtig' (terrifying, noble, magnificent), and is assigned to men as opposed to women, English as opposed to French, and so on.

[2] Addison ('On Imagination', *Spectator*, Nos. 411 et seq.), ascribing sublimity to greatness, says that it is only seen in nature, for its final cause is that we may find complete satisfaction in God alone (iii, iv). Our imagination loves to grasp at anything that is too big for its capacity (ii), but soon comes to a stand (x). Burke ascribes it to the terrible.

action guided purely by reverence for the moral law, these visible portents of mortality, when not actually menacing, fill us with exultation at humanity's high calling to despise, in obedience to duty, even ruin, death and all for which we naturally concern ourselves.

Not then when it beholds the great and powerful things of this world, not even strictly when 'it creates transcending these, Far other worlds and other seas,' but when by these experiences it becomes advised of its own destiny, is the mind of man confronted by the Sublime.

5. No one probably would today support this theory as it stands. In its exclusion of art and everything except physical strength and bigness it is plainly a less defensible classification than that of Addison, whose Sublime at least covered the tragedy of King Lear and the Miltonic Satan. These sharp limitations and the choice of instances are too obviously caused, in part by the necessity for filling in the vast gulf left by the rejection of all but formal beauty, and in part by the peculiar difficulty, for one of Kant's years, in feeling at home with that new expressiveness which was being discovered in the wilder aspects of nature by the genius of the Romantic transition. It is significant for a historian of our concept that it first came into its present prominence in the philosophy of a time perhaps unrivalled for the rapid reversal of artistic orthodoxy. A whole new world was being conquered for aesthetic satisfaction; but much of it was so Gothic, so rude, so shocking to the polite, the regular and the pastoral, that men hesitated to call it beautiful, could hardly believe, indeed, that they felt it to be so.[1]

6. But apart from these mistakes, due to his system and the conditions of the time, there is a deeper error. It is not the moral nor yet the intellectual gifts of humanity which haunt us like a passion in the mountain and the cataract. These might equally be indicated by the minute sand-grain, suggesting all the puzzles of infinite divisibility and enumeration; the long-drawn monotone, hinting at a past

[1] Cf. Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty*, 3rd edition, 1729. Hegel, *Aesthetik*, Einleitung, p. 44: 'And this so-called good taste is always alarmed by any deeper impression'; cf. pp. 97, 98, 132 and 381 (all in vol. i).

and future eternity; or the irresistibly alluring Helen, making us immortal with a stimulation of the categorical imperative.

7. Hegel[1] as usual elicits the most valuable essence of Kant's thought while discarding its accidental encumbrances. He finds sublimity in a unique object, the God of one strain of Hebrew poetry. He does not believe in the sublimity of size,[2] nor in that of nature, nor in that of the individual mind. For the Psalmist singles out all the great and glorious things of the earth to humble them before that almighty and invisible One to whom alone is the glory.[3]

Kant's sublimity means to be reminded by great things of our own superior worth; Hegel's, by their annihilation, of Omnipotence. Coleridge, Wordsworth and their disciples follow Kant or Hegel according as they are dealing with poetry or nature. Hegel further subdivides the concept into a positive, immanent Sublime, found in the pantheistic[4] presentation of a universal good simply affirming and rejoicing in individual lives, and a negative or transcendent one, which alone properly deserves the name. The first would apparently cause no initial feeling of repulsion or depression, the second would allow no ultimate reconciliation of the overwhelming Absolute with finite natural objects but only with ourselves. His theory then uses sublimity merely as a name for a narrow and fairly recognizable class of aesthetic effects, attainable it is true only when we are dealing with high matters – a certain tragic, philosophical or religious intuition of life – but in itself no more an essential differentiation of beauty – for which office Hegel has other candidates – than would be the class of Ghost Stories or Intimations of Immortality. We must evidently go further for a theory of the popular conception in its later developments, and the fairest method will be to examine by the test of experience the admirable essay in which Mr Bradley,[5] founding himself, as he says, to some extent on

[1] *Aesthetik*, vol. i, pp. 465–72; cf. *Philosophie der Religion*, II. ii. i (vol. xii, pp. 39–79).

[2] *Encyklopädie*, § 94: 'We must abandon the unending contemplation (of infinite space); not, however, because it is too sublime, but because it is too tedious'; cf. § 104.

[3] Cf. Addison, *Spectator*, No. 411, and Coleridge to Thelwall, 1797, *Letters*, p. 228; Lotze, *Grundzüge d. Aesthet.*, §§ 20–21. Hegel quotes especially Psalms xc and civ.

[4] *Aesthetik*, i, pp. 454–65.

[5] A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 1909.

Hartmann, has endeavoured to harmonize the countless fluctuating shades of meaning. For it will probably be admitted that he is likely to have made out as good a case for the defence as any recent writer; and to consider every theory in detail would be impossible.[1]

8. Bradley defines the Sublime as a species of the Beautiful: 'A large part of its effect is due to the general nature of Beauty.' Its differentia is Greatness: 'exceeding or overwhelming greatness.' So that a beautiful thing, if great also, should be sublime. This is qualified by the explanation that size is only sublime when construed as the sign of power, or at least this is said to be certainly the case with living beings.

Corresponding to this difference in objects a difference is described in the feelings they excite. The pleasure we take in sublimity, instead of being immediate, purely affirmative, as is that of beauty, is conditioned by a previous negative stage of repulsion in which we feel 'checked, baffled, menaced.' This, however, is followed by a feeling of 'expansion or uplifting', and the last stage is always positive, for even when the sublime thing is terrible or forbidding we end in a consciousness of union with it.

Besides the usual instances of mountains, sea and sky, Mr Bradley suggests, as test cases, babies, rainbows, sunrise in the high Alps, and a sparrow dying in defence of its young from a dog.

Such a view as that before us avoids many difficulties of older accounts; especially by making sublimity a species, instead of the antithesis, of beauty; by claiming that we do, therefore, ultimately sympathize with the sublime object; and by dropping the distinction between the Mathematical and Dynamic, that is between the sublime of mere size and that of power. But just these changes which make the theory less unplausible make the class so vague, and the varieties of it so heterogeneous, that we may ask if it is a real class at all, or only an unessential concept under which nearly any divergences from the normal types of beauty, that can from different points of view be detected, are arbitrarily put together. The

[1] Some idea of the number and variety of theories upon the subject between Kant and Hartmann may be gathered from Seidl, *Zur Geschichte des Erhabenheitsbegriffes seit Kant* (Leipzig, 1888).

definition indeed almost by its terms arouses this suspicion. We do not know whether 'very powerful' is to be regarded as an essential specification of the general concept 'beauty'; it is hardly certain that we are offered in 'sublimity' more than the mere sum of the two qualities beauty and power.

To examine the value of this theory we may ask two questions: first, do objects of the kind described always occasion the feelings described? And second: are the feelings described only occasioned by objects of the kind described?

9. (1) It is obvious and irrelevant that what in ordinary language would be called the same object may at the same time appear sublime and not sublime to equally good judges. As Mr Bradley says, we more often see the beauty than the sublimity of mountains among which we live. 'Our business,'[1] writes Wordsworth, 'is not so much with objects as with the law under which they are contemplated – the same object may be both beautiful and sublime, but it cannot be felt to be such at the same moment.' The question then that we have to ask is this: So far as a great beautiful object is construed as the sign of an unmeasured power, is our pleasure in it always conditioned by a preliminary negative stage in which we feel repelled, checked, baffled or menaced?

I cannot find that it is so in my own case. Never till I had read Kant did it occur to me that sunrise over Monte Rosa gave rise to any such feelings. Yet I do find, on analysis of one's un-self-conscious delight in it, an element of feeling for size, but a wholly sympathetic one; an imaginative exhilaration, as it were, in being so great oneself, or in anything so great having one's own consciousness. Certainly it is often the vastness of a vast view that pleases us; does it first repel us?

On the other hand, I did not see the Falls of Schaffhausen till I had read Kant and some other writers on the sublime. I went to them partly, indeed, to see if I should verify Coleridge's famous distinction: but though I tried to analyze my feelings carefully, and though the most prominent of them was one for the enormous display of power, I could discover nothing of the negative, checked, menaced

[1] *Letters of the Wordsworth Family* (edited by Knight), vol. ii, p. 245.

preliminary state. My pleasure seemed to be immediate. 'Pretty' no doubt would have been an inappropriate word, but 'beautiful' would have satisfied me, and I should have accepted 'graceful' with some enthusiasm. For the main feeling, it seemed to me, was one of ready sympathy for all this untiring and easy motion. It gave one the same feeling of inexhaustible life and lightness and activity that one gets from the running of a fawn or the waves of a rough sea, or the dancing of a child. Each of these is of course a different beauty, but I do not see why any one should be assigned to a different species.[1]

And just as this last analogy has often suggested itself to the poets,[2] so, at the risk of amusing the critic, I must admit finding the 'statuesque' beauty of a mature human being in repose comparable to that of great mountains: as, for instance, in the headless female group on the Parthenon pediment,

> *Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows*
> *Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love.*[3]

To catch a full view of the Alps unexpectedly from Milan cathedral is an experience corresponding closely to what the poets tell of 'Love at first sight'. I have certainly experienced what may be called 'negative' feelings among mountains; but as they occurred only when I was attempting or imagining an ascent, and gave place to 'positive' feelings only when this had been achieved, they were no more aesthetic in themselves than is physical giddiness on a pinnacle, sea-sickness in a storm, or relief on sighting safety. None of these sensations would *arise* from a picture, and perhaps this is why Kant confined sublimity to nature. On the other hand, each might be *expressed* in a work of art, or even in a natural landscape; but this expression, whether of discomfort or despair, need not produce any feeling of elevation or rapture except such as arises from all that is beautiful, heightened in this case by the difficulty of escaping the practical distaste.

[1] There certainly are people to whom sea and starry skies suggest *quasi*-mathematical feelings of oppression, which I myself have experienced only in nightmare.

[2] Cf. p. 24, *supra*, note 4.

[3] Marlowe, *Dr Faustus*, I. i.

The same question, whether the beauty of powerful things is always accompanied by repulsion, may be raised about works of art; and of them I should instance the following, which, though we construe them as expressing power, and that often by the great size of what they represent,[1] yet arouse no momentary feelings of menace or repulsion:

In sculpture: the Venus of Melos and Michelangelo's Medici Tombs:

In painting: Constable's clouds, some of which suggest by their volume immense power and sweep, but of a wholly attractive kind, so that we look at them with the same immediate pleasure with which we watch a sea-gull; or some of Turner's sunsets, where the vastness of heaven is made both obvious and enchanting; or Blake's drawing of Dawn; or the nudes of the Sistine ceiling.

In poetry: Addison's instance from Milton [2]

*Imparadized in one another's arms.*

Johnson's from Homer[3] –

γέγηθε δὲ τε φρένα ποιμήν.

[the shepherd joyed in his heart] at starlight.

Goethe's –

*Ueber alle Gipfeln*
*Ist Ruh,*
[On every peak is peace]

. . . . .

*Warte nur, balde*
*Ruhest du auch.*

[But wait and thou too shalt have peace]

Wordsworth's cloud [4]—

*That heareth not the loud winds when they call*
*And moveth all together if it move at all.*

[1] Perhaps sometimes assisted by the colossal scale of the actual work.
[2] *Spectator*, No. 285, *P.L.*, iv. 506.
[3] Op. cit. (p. 150, *supra*). *Il.* viii. 559.
[4] *Resolution.*

Or Shakespeare's [1] –

*Full many a glorious morning have I seen*
*Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye.*

Finally, I do not see why mere power, when a hostile relation of it to the human will is not part of the aesthetic presentation, should necessarily give rise to any such feelings. To suppose that it does so implies the assumption that in presence of a very great or strong, though beautiful, object the aesthetic imagination at once conjures up nightmares of impending annihilation. Surely, on a truer analysis, just so far as our imagination is aesthetic, we are unapt to take this practical point of view. Unless the external and hostile relation of the human will to the object be definitely suggested, we rather luxuriate in glad sympathy with the splendid existence of such magnitude for its own sake. Any one may notice that in watching the most terrific breakers on the Atlantic coast it is never with the protecting rock, but with the threatening waves that he naturally sympathizes, always wishing for yet a bigger one.

So far as with this cheerful admiration for great powers and wide reaches there is bound up a sense of short-coming – not only that we ourselves are small but that our imagination is weak and soon wearied; – of all such feelings I would rather accept an account, like that of Ruge,[2] which puts the negative or painful feeling second and the sympathetic expansion first. But this feeling of our own inferiority both to what we admire and to those imaginative moments when we most admire it, is at least as characteristic of our appreciation for simple beauty as of that for the most enormous and terrible, and is not so much a part as a defect of the aesthetic act.

10. (2) Leaving this question, we may now ask whether the effects which Mr Bradley describes are not sometimes produced upon us by the aesthetic contemplation of objects other than those to which he attributes them. The effects in question are these: 'a sense

[1] *Sonnet* xxxiii.

[2] *Neue Vorschule der Aesthetik* (Halle, 1837), p. 72. Quoted by Seidl. I have not seen Ruge's book.

of being checked or baffled or even stupefied or possibly even repelled or menaced, as though something were affecting us which we could not receive or grasp or stand up to.'

This does, I think, describe certain aesthetical effects, but I do not feel sure that they are always the effects of objects construed as signs of power. I once asked a friend whose taste and judgement I respect, but who is not much read in the philosophy of this subject, how he would apply the ordinary distinction of beauty and sublimity to different arts. He instanced that in poetry Keats' *Ode to a Greek Urn* might be beautiful, and Wordsworth's *Michael* sublime; in painting, Giorgione's *Fête Champêtre* beautiful, and Millet's *Gleaners* or the portrait of an old woman by Rembrandt, sublime.[1] He thought the distinction unmeaning in natural scenery, but able to be applied to human beings; and on being pressed for the principle of his application, suggested that by 'beautiful' he meant what might be called the visibly or sensuously attractive, while the 'sublime' would be possessed of 'other important qualities, yet regarded somehow aesthetically.' Another friend said that he should never spontaneously use the word 'sublime' of artistic beauty, but might apply it to manifestations of the destructive power of nature on a great scale.[2] A third, a painter, considered that 'sublime' was not an adjective naturally applicable either to art or to nature, but only to certain human qualities, as, for instance, in the phrase 'sublime egotism', but that if a subject had to be found for it elsewhere, it would always be something describable as 'removed' or mysterious,[3] especially objects seen under a strange light. In the second of these answers only was there any word of size or strength, and there with an anomalous qualification. Nor do I find any notion of size or force in many of the poetical expressions that seem to be most 'sublime' – that is, to produce positive feelings of uplifting or self-expansion only by the mediation of a negative feeling of hostility or menace. Such expres-

[1] Cf. Ruskin (*Modern Painters*, i. 2): 'Sorrow and old age are both sublime.' Byron seems to have thought that mountains were naturally sublime, but humanity only in art. *Letter to John Murray on Bowles' Strictures on Pope*, 1821.

[2] Cf. Ruskin (*Modern Painters*, i. 40): 'Greatness of suffering or extent of destruction.'

[3] Cf. Ruskin (*Modern Painters*, i. 40): 'Wherever the mind contemplates anything above itself'; cf. T. Warton, *Spenser's Fairy Queen*, and Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

sions are that of the dying Hippolytus: *κεκαρτέρηται τἄμα* [I have endured to the end] and the complaint of Helen:[1]

> *οἷσιν ἐπὶ Ζεὺς θῆκε κακὸν μόρον, ὡς καὶ ὀπίσσω*
> *ἀνθρώποισι πελώμεθ' ἀοίδιμοι ἐσσομένοισιν.*
>
> [And on us has Zeus laid a bitter fate, that we might go down to ages in song and story]

where it is not at all to the power of Zeus that my notion of sublimity attaches.

'Beauty that is no stronger than a flower', 'old, unhappy, far-off things', the first stanza of *Tears, Idle Tears*, have all, I suppose, some 'sublimity'; and so, I suppose, to the poet has the meanest flower, so long as it gives him thoughts too deep for tears. But my difficulty comes out most clearly with respect to Mr Bradley's chief instance, the incident which he quotes from Tourgenieff:

> I was on my way home from hunting, and was walking up the garden avenue. My dog was running on in front of me.
>
> Suddenly he slackened his pace, and began to steal forward as though he scented game ahead. I looked along the avenue; and I saw on the ground a young sparrow, its beak edged with yellow, and its head covered with soft down. It had fallen from the nest (a strong wind was blowing, and shaking the birches of the avenue); and there it sat and never stirred, except to stretch out its little half-grown wings in a helpless flutter.
>
> My dog was slowly approaching it, when suddenly, darting from the tree overhead, an old black-throated sparrow dropped like a stone right before his nose, and all rumpled and flustered, with a plaintive desperate cry flung itself once, twice, at his open jaws with their great teeth.
>
> It would save its young one; it screened it with its own body; the tiny frame quivered with terror; the little cries grew wild and hoarse; it sank and died. It had sacrificed itself.

[1] *Il.*, vi. 358.

What a huge monster the dog must have seemed to it! And yet it could not stay up there on its safe bough. A power stronger than its own will tore it away.

My dog stood still, and then slunk back disconcerted. Plainly he too had to recognize that power. I called him to me; and a feeling of reverence came over me as I passed on.

Yes, do not laugh. It was really reverence I felt before that little heroic bird and the passionate outburst of its love.

Love, I thought, is verily stronger than death and the terror of death. By love, only by love, is life sustained and moved.

11. Here the words greatness and force seem only applicable with some strain. The sparrow is small; its utmost efforts, regarded as force or power, are contemptible; it is crushed without effort. If anything here exhibits greatness which can be construed as a sign of power it is the dog: – 'What a huge monster it must have seemed' – indeed he has much in common with the blind forces of nature and other usual instances of sublimity quoted by Mr Bradley: 'The sublimity of Behemoth and Leviathan . . . lies in the contrast of their enormous might with the puny power of man.' The sparrow has none of these qualities, but it has what Mr Bradley calls 'moral force'. But if we are to take words so metaphorically as this, is there anything that may not be argued to be sublime? We speak of 'very great' beauty and cowardice and 'a very powerful' attraction, though plainly none of these alone could be, at least for Mr Bradley, sublime;[1] while the sparrow plainly has some quality that can be so described, but that is, surely, not power, but extraordinary value combined with weakness and failure. And surely, in thus naming what we admire in it we should be characterizing it much more essentially, should be more truly describing

[1] Ruskin, indeed, says (*Modern Painters*, i. 40) that there is perhaps no desirable quality of a work of art which, in its perfection, is not in some way or degree sublime; though this of course is scarcely consistent with what he says elsewhere. Thackeray must have held the same view when he said of Pope (*English Humourists*), 'The shafts of his satire rise sublimely', and called the concluding lines of the *Dunciad* 'the very greatest height to which his sublime art has attained'. Ruskin describes as sublime the donkey in Tintoretto's 'Flight into Egypt' at the Scuola di San Rocco, *Stones of Venice*, Venetian Index, s.v. San Rocco, and cf. *Seven Lamps*, vi. 12.

the causes of our admiration than by using words like size and force which relate it to such strange fellows as Behemoth and Leviathan.

Nor, to return for a moment to the former question and apply it to this instance, can I detect that on first hearing of the sparrow I am checked, baffled, stupefied, repelled or menaced. These feelings are rather excited by the dog and those intolerable processes of blind or living nature which he represents. Yet with the dog, or the ravening principle, I do not notice myself at any subsequent stage to be brought into feelings of union. What first repels us in the story continues to repel us to the last, and what ultimately we love and reverence had barely to be described to excite those feelings. It may be urged that such analysis misrepresents what is really one complex state of mind, and that it is the whole story which, like any other tragedy, is sublime, or, in other words, both repels and attracts us. But I do not think that the repulsion is necessarily prior. I do not think that the story is essentially to be described as power signified by size, and, if we are told to distinguish in our complex state of mind separate stages of repulsion and attraction, we are not only allowed but bound to point out that it is separate elements in the story which are repulsive and attractive.

If any purpose is to be served by a concept which classes together for aesthetic purposes the sparrow, Behemoth and a rainbow, it seems very necessary to make these further distinctions.

For myself, so far, I should conclude that some things beautiful have great size, some have elements which regarded separately – as they must be in the process which precedes the intuition of the beautiful whole – affect us as checking or disturbing; and some have both.

12. But the sense of being checked, baffled, stupefied, repelled or menaced, which seems the most generally accepted mark of sublimity – Herder, perhaps, being the principal dissentient – attaches, so far as I can understand, to *beautiful* objects only if, in spite of their beauty, they are regarded as having a hostile relation to the human will.[1] In all such cases an effort is required to throw off our

[1] Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii, 39.

instincts of self-preservation and enjoy what is beautiful in the object for its own sake.[1]

In the case of a storm we are repelled by its destructiveness, attracted by its splendid strength. In the case of a tragic hero we may be repelled by his sufferings or their causes, attracted by the fortitude with which he bears them, or the constancy with which, like the sparrow, he encounters them in obedience to love or duty. Looking at the storm the aesthetic imagination overcomes human fears; looking at Prometheus it sees that he has overcome pain and it shares in his victory.

13. In both cases we sympathize with the sublime object, but while the storm perhaps at first repelled us, neither Prometheus nor the sparrow ever did, but something else, the vultures or the dog. It is only before we have imaginatively identified ourselves with the storm that we think of its inconvenience; Prometheus on the other hand is a good neighbour, and only when we have identified ourselves with him does the inconvenience begin. We sympathize with the storm though it inflicts pain, with Prometheus though he feels pain – though he faces the storm. All these sympathies are practical; if only aesthetic sympathy is meant *cadit quaestio*, for all beauty has that.

14. Here we already seem to have two species of so-called sublimity which are strikingly different. If one be that of Prometheus and the other that of the Caucasus, a question at once arises whether there be not a third kind which might be called that of Brutal Violence. Mr Bradley mentions among sublime things 'Fate or Death . . . imagined as inevitable, irresistible, *ineluctabile fatum*.' But such impersonations, with the Aeschylean Κράτος καὶ Βία [Power and Violence] and the Miltonic Sin and Death, belie his descriptions of the sublime and differ from the two species we have already distinguished in one important respect. Though they are aesthetic presentations of power in a repulsive form, the negative stage of our feeling is not followed by a positive one consisting in a

[1] Mr Bradley in showing that his sublime need 'show no hostility to *sense*: e.g., a sublime lion', surely does not cover the whole ground. Though it does not hurt us to recognize a lion we can only recognize it as hurtful. (The italics are mine.)

practical feeling of union with them. Such objects are generally personifications which combine the havoc of blind natural forces with the conscious choice of a man, for then we both fear their works and loathe their feelings; though some natural powers, such as poverty and pestilence, which are destructive but not easily picturable as delighting in their office, may be represented in this light without direct personification. But if an object be regarded as wholly repulsive, can it be accompanied by those feelings of moral elevation which all allow to be connected with sublimity? Kant tells us that it most certainly can. And the importance of this species of sublimity, to which Mr Bradley would apparently deny the name, is indicated by the fact that, for Kant, who first scientifically discussed the matter, it was the only one.

Kant is dealing with natural sublimity. In art his Sublime would be helped to its effect on us by the exhibition of its effect on those characters to which it is the foil. Regarding the hateful and irresistible forces which have chained Prometheus, we more readily recall our own superiority, our right and duty to despise them, by the example of the hero who does despise them.

If then we take the main points in Mr Bradley's account to be:

1. Exceeding size or power, which causes in us
2. first, a negative state of being checked or repelled but
3. later, a rush of self-expansion or uplifting; which last feelings are
4. positive feelings of union with the object.

we may admit that on some occasions all these requirements are fulfilled; and these would, perhaps, be usually, though not always, considered typical instances of sublimity. But there are several reputable candidates for the title:

(*a*) Objects, satisfying 1, 3, 4, but not necessarily 2, e.g., rainbow, mountain.[1]

(*b*) Objects satisfying 2, 3, 4, but not necessarily 1, e.g., old beggar of Rembrandt.

[1] See Note at end of chapter.

(*c*) Objects satisfying 2, 3, but not necessarily 1 or 4, e.g., viper, poverty personified.

(*d*) Objects satisfying 1, 2, 3, but not necessarily 4, e.g., Fate, Iago, earthquake.

(*e*) Objects satisfying 1, 2, 3, 4, e.g., Jehovah, heroic tragedy, or, according to Mr Bradley, a hurricane.

Only 3 seems to be constantly present; and 3, being a general characteristic of aesthetic appreciation, is always in some degree an effect also of beauty,[1] in which case moreover it is accompanied by 4 in the form of aesthetic sympathy.

While then 3 is constant, it will be noticed that where 2 is absent we naturally and necessarily have 4 present, but where 2 is present we may or may not find 4. This depends upon the ambiguity already indicated in 2. The negative feeling (2) is sometimes one of horror for the objects' action on humanity, as in the viper and Iago; in which case we lack positive feelings of reunion with them as in (*c*) and (*d*). But sometimes the negative feeling (2) is a shrinking from the objects' sufferings, as with the beggar, Prometheus or the sparrow; and then we certainly can have the positive feeling as in (*b*). But when we shrink from an object's suffering we can hardly be imagining it to possess 'unmeasured' or incomparable force. So if we have 1 we can only have 2 in the sense of hating the objects' behaviour, and if we have 2 in this sense we cannot easily have 4. That is to say we can seldom have 1, 2, 3, 4 together. I have however included such a collection under (*e*) and offered as an instance a hurricane. A hurricane is powerful, its visible effects may be awful we may be uplifted by seeing it,[2] and this exaltation may consist in a feeling of union with it. But the last possibility is I think not often realized along with the second; that is, if our aesthetic object is the hurricane as repulsively destructive: or, in other words, once more, 2, in the sense of hating an object's conduct is incompatible with 4. This at least is certainly so when the object is human, for then harmfulness is cruelty and can scarcely be overlooked in our sympathy with power.

[1] Schelling, *Werke*, i, p. 627.

[2] Not only aesthetically but also because we should like to be it.

Hegel seems to demand the same combination, but he makes this possible by limiting sublimity to God as presented in Hebrew poetry. The unique character of this object is that while its power is infinite (1), and while the effect of this power in crushing our sensuous individualities is naturally repulsive to us (2), yet, since its goodness or worth is no less superior to ours than is its power, we are uplifted by the spectacle of its victory (3), and triumph spiritually in its annihilation of what we recognize to be, in the end, no more adequate to our true selves than to it. And his formula, once more, seems to a great extent to be satisfied by much tragedy.

(*a*) appears to be the class alone or mainly recognized by 'Longinus',[1] Addison,[2] Home,[3] Payne Knight,[4] Herder,[5] Johnson,[6] Hegel in his 'Immanent Sublime'; (*b*) by Schopenhauer;[7] (*c*) by Burke;[8] (*d*) by Kant,[9] Coleridge,[10] Wordsworth,[11] De Quincey[12] (but see below); (*e*) by Hegel in his 'True Sublime'.[13]

There are further curious differences of opinion as to the kind of object in which the desired conditions can be realized. Some of these I have already instanced; Kant seems to think only in nature; Schelling, best in art; Schiller[14] and Lamb,[15] 'in the heart of man; in the actions and sufferings of the greatest minds'; Hegel, in God alone.

15. It is on a review of contradictions and cross-distinctions such as these that we are compelled to agree with Croce[16] that the con-

[1] Especially ch. xxxv.
[2] *Spectator*, Nos. 285, 412, etc.
[3] *Elements of Criticism*, ch. iv.
[4] *On Taste*, pt. iii. ch. i. § 19.
[5] *Kalligone*.
[6] Op. cit., p. 150, *supra*.
[7] Loc. cit.
[8] *The Sublime and Beautiful*, pt. ii. especially § 2.
[9] Loc. cit.
[10] *Biog. Lit.* (edited by Shawcross), vol. ii, pp. 225–6, 309. *Letters* (edited by E. H. Coleridge), p. 228. 'Notes on Coleridge's Marginalia to Kalligone', by Shawcross, in *Notes and Queries*, 28 October 1905. *Letters from the Lake Poets*, p. 322.
[11] *The Recluse*. The passage beginning 'Stern was the face of Nature'. Letters, op. cit., vol. ii, p. 250. *D. Wordsworth's Journals* (edited by Knight), vol. i, p. 195; ii, p. 209.
[12] Loc. cit., p. 220.
[13] *Aesthetik*, vol. i, pp. 465–72.
[14] *An die Astronomen*.
[15] *Specimens of Dramatic Poets*, vol. i, p. 284.
[16] *Estetica*, ch. xii, pp. 103, 107; cf. 'One of those distinctions that seem very real when you think lazily, but diminish and diminish until they almost vanish when you think more vigorously' (C. E. Montague on 'The Literary Play' in *Essays and Studies of the English Association*, vol. iii).

cept has no philosophic value; it is only one of those inadequate classifications, which can be stretched and multiplied indefinitely for the infinitely complicated gradations of good and bad which are life.[1] 'Everything,' he concludes, 'is sublime which ever has been or shall be so called.'

But, it may be argued, this is either the suicide of philosophy and of criticism or the scornful gift of the wise to stupidity and idleness. For though only the philistine believes that what is individual can be exhausted in a formula, it is also he alone who thinks that the application of thought to life is unprofitable. It is better to make inadequate distinctions than none; and when Croce, applying his doctrine, tells us that 'Dante's Farinata is aesthetically beautiful and nothing but beautiful; if his will appear sublime, if Dante's presentation of him, by its genius, appear sublime . . . these are not aesthetic considerations,' we are apt to feel that the best is indeed the enemy of the good. Because Dante's Farinata can be fully described by Dante alone, shall we say that all he has in common with Milton's Satan, which is not shared with Sancho Panza, cannot be indicated to any purpose of aesthetic criticism?

There is much plausibility in such a defence of the distinction and I was once convinced by it. For though it is impossible to admit the pretensions of sublimity to the rank of a philosophical concept like beauty, yet doubtless along with such companions as realism and pathos, symbolism and genre, it has its place as a more or less *useful* classification of similar individuals within the aesthetic sphere.

Now the *use* of such empirical generalities depends less upon the importance of the 'subject' which they may define than upon the extent of the resemblance which they indicate and the approximation to accuracy of which they admit. So that if the Sublime is to be admitted as a more scientific kind than the Bacchanalian – since neither is philosophic – that must be not because Milton is a better man than Suckling, or the *Vanity of Human Wishes* a more respectable theme than *Venus and Adonis*, but because by it we can indicate resemblances less superficial than we can by the other.

[1] It is, on the whole, a convenient classification, as it is to arrange books by size, but both are often inconvenient and may be called 'irrational'.

16. Pursuing then a policy of conciliation, we may attempt a definition of the expression as it is commonly used. It seems to me that the current contrast of sublime and beautiful is really a combination of two more fundamental and precise generalizations. First there is the distinction between the beauty of things in themselves obviously congenial to us and that of those which *prima facie* have a hostile relation to the human will. This is something like the difference between sad and glad modes of beauty which Mr Bradley warns us not to confuse with that between beauty and sublimity.

Crossing and confusing this is a distinction between objects whose 'beauty' is the expression of activities with which we imaginatively endow them, and objects whose 'beauty' merely expresses the activities they stimulate in us. The Melian Aphrodite, for instance, seems to embody all the divine activities of the lover, while even that of Giorgione hardly aims beyond presenting the most divinely lovable of women. Since this distinction, though very necessary to be minded by the critic, is not often explicitly recognized, and has not, so far as I know, acquired a terminology,[1] it is perhaps useful to elucidate it by examples.

The two methods in question may be called for brevity the *intrinsic* and the *extrinsic* treatment; the first finding expression in things through what they are, or are imagined to be, for themselves, the second through their effect upon some other, probably the artist. The distinction is perhaps clearest where the subject matter is human. Children have of necessity been treated far more often 'extrinsically' for their 'sublime', pathetic or amusing effect upon the grown-up world, than 'intrinsically' for their own feelings. There is always, too, a natural tendency, among all but the most imaginative artists at their most imaginative moments, to treat the other sex from the extrinsic point of view. The conception of woman in the poets has ranged from the pretty to the 'sublime';

[1] It has clearly some affinity with the famous but obscure distinction between Imagination and Fancy (cf. *supra*, pp. 131, 132), for the former is spoken of by Wordsworth (Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*) as 'carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of science' and by Coleridge (*Lectures*, Bohn, p. 282) as 'self-position'. And this distinction, as I have suggested in treating of Nietzsche, is comparable to that which he draws between Dionysiac and Apolline art, *supra*, p. 98.

she has been regarded as man's desirable play-fellow – τὰς παρθένος οἷα γελᾶντι [How the maidens laugh!] – as the domestic help meet for him, as the resistless fate 'to win him soon to hell', as an inspiring divinity, as 'nobly planned To warn, to comfort and command'; but far less often as 'a spirit still', with its own views and wants, quite other perhaps than to be enjoyed or worshipped, damning or commanding incidentally in pursuit of its proper purposes. Women's portraits of men have naturally been no more successful; Charlotte Brontë's men may be sometimes sublime and are sometimes ridiculous, but they are never intrinsically alive like her heroines. Nausicaa and Andromache, Alcestis and Hecuba, many of Shakespeare's women, and some of Velasquez, are examples of this intrinsic treatment; within the limits of which we can again traverse the whole scale of feeling from the birdlike joy in life of '*Suis-je, suis-je, suis-je belle?*' to the immortal longings of Cleopatra.[1]

But this difference of treatment is no less vital, if subtler, when the artist is dealing with animate or inanimate nature. Swinburne in his *Sea-mew*[2] treats both intrinsically:

> *When I had wings, my brother,*
> *Such wings were mine as thine.*
>
> . . . . .
>
> *When, loud with life that quakes,*
> *The wave's wing spreads and flutters,*
> *The wave's heart swells and breaks.*

And the storm which would have reminded Kant of his duty stirs in Shelley only longings –

> *to pant beneath thy power and share*
> *The impulse of thy strength, only less free*
> *Than thou, O uncontrollable.*[3]

[1] Thus, curiously, one of the few places where Dante ventures upon an intrinsic treatment of Beatrice is also one of the few where he stoops from a 'sublime' to an almost playful tone (*Paradiso*, x. 61).

[2] *Poems and Ballads*, iii.

[3] *Ode to the West Wind.*

On the other hand nature may be treated extrinsically; as often to great effects of beauty in the classics:

> *At secura quies et nescia fallere vita,*
> *Dives opum variarum; at latis otia fundis,*
> *Speluncae, vivique lacus; at frigida Tempe*
> *Mugitusque boum, mollesque sub arbore somni,*[1]

and sometimes, as in Pomfret's *Choice*, rather ludicrously in the classicists. The more usual method of regarding nature is a compound of these two, as in Wordsworth's daffodils or Marvell's 'green thought in a green shade'.

17. This distinction then of intrinsic and extrinsic cuts across that other of hostile and congenial. When a thing naturally hostile to the human will is expressive solely from the natural point of view of that hostility, we may get something like the sublime as Kant understood it. Its very monstrosity might suggest heroic resistance. If such a thing, on the other hand, expressed simply valuable activities imaginatively ascribed to it, that is if we were simply unaware of its hostility, it would be purely beautiful though also practically sympathetic. But if the second attitude were mediated by the first, if it cost us an effort to express ourselves in the activities of something whose nature was against our interests, we might have the sublime as understood by Mr Bradley, in which the final positive stage is less a consciousness of our own high destiny than one of union with the object; an expression not of the infinite in us but of our reverence for the infinite in it.

Similarly an object friendly to human purposes, if expressive through its own imagined activities, gives the ordinary type of beauty, which occupies a middle position, between that of things expressing hostility and that of things treated as themselves dead but because of their pleasant uses expressing activity in us.

There remains the case of a person congenial but voluntarily suffering terrible things. Extrinsically he merely expresses harrowing

[1] Virgil, *Georg.*, ii. 467. How meticulous must become any attempt to enmesh the individual by formulas is well shown in this context by the expression '*vivi lacus*' – luxurious things to have about one, for they have a happy life of their own.

pity, or, if he is also beneficial, the two qualities seem rather compounded in what is a kind of pathos, than combined to any new effect; when he is intrinsically treated we ethically sympathize with his heroism, and here Mr Bradley's demands for sublimity are satisfied, if he is right in classing suffering virtue as a form of power or force, and if we note that what we sympathize with is not exactly what repelled us. Hegel's formula seems to me to fit the case better; what is sublime is the expression of desire or power to triumph in one's own destruction.

18. Since the word Sublime will no doubt continue to be used as a class-name outside the Hegelian sense, I should wish to confine it to the aesthetic aspect of those objects which are naturally hostile to humanity, and to classify such objects further according[1] as there is ultimately a sympathetic union with their activities or only a reaction in the recollection of our nobler faculties. Many such things – death, pain, despised love – are hardly likely by any freak of fashion to become agreeable to the mass of mankind. But many objects that strike one age mainly by their mystery and strangeness, their contempt and cruelty for our comfortable uses, become to the next such familiar objects of aesthetic pleasure, perhaps also so actually tamed and confined by the applications of science, that most men are unconscious of any effort in regarding them as simply beautiful. Plainly where there is considerable hostility there will most often be considerable power, but where there is no hostility there need be no repulsion.

If, however, the element of power and greatness turns out to be that which most people feel essential for 'sublimity', the word must of course be so applied; and I should then desire to urge that though a very powerful thing may easily be menacing and repulsive, this is purely incidental to its power, which may just as easily be a pleasure both to wield and to contemplate.

Surely we cannot resist concluding from all this that 'Sublimity' is only a little worthier of scientific respect than any vague interjection expressing aesthetic approval; and that Fanny Burney did it no great injustice when she described the scenery about Lyme

[1] Cf. *Hamlet*, II. i. 417. Polonius.

Regis as 'luxuriant, and with just so much of the approach to sublime as is the province of unterrific beauty'.[1]

Many of the most expressive of these interjections are mere slang, but therefore perhaps more respectable than 'Sublime' which in this sense is almost entirely a dictionary word invented by critics and translators, adopted by popular philosophy as loose enough to fit the most opposite theories.[2] They all attempt to classify expression by its 'subject-matter'.

19. If the Sublime is anything more than this – and we shall be justly challenged to explain the importance it has, wrongfully, as we contend, assumed – it is for a reason somewhat different from those advanced by its supporters. Either they have opposed it to beauty as a cognate species of some genus whose namelessness might have given them pause, or they have made it a species of beauty co-ordinate with another species which has usurped the generic name. But what they have often meant by it has been a high degree of beauty.[3]

For though beauty is a universal which contains individuals but no species, yet one thing is, I think, more beautiful than another, and these degrees of beauty in individuals are estimated not only by mere quantity or the extent of ground covered,[4] but by something that may be called depth, which depends really upon the apparent recalcitrancy of the elements taken up. So that the beautiful whole which has absorbed into its beauty the most of what outside it would be most ugly is the most sublime or most deeply beautiful, but celebrates a triumph differing only in degree from that of every

[1] *Diary of Madame D'Arblay*, 1791 (edited by A. Dobson), vol. v, p. 14.

[2] Akenside, for instance, seems to have modified his already sophisticated *Pleasures of Imagination* out of deference to the imaginative psychology of Burke. In 1744 the First Book speaks of 'three illustrious orders . . . the sublime, the wonderful, the fair'. In 1757 they are only two. Burke published in the interval.

[3] Cf. Ruskin, loc. cit., p. 240. This has also been to some extent indicated by Schopenhauer (*Aphorismen, Nachlasse*, edited by Frauenstadt, pp. 128–37) and Kirchmann (*Aesthetik auf realistischer Grundlage*, ii, p. 11).

[4] I think a very wide extent of beauty is sometimes called sublime. But this Mr Bradley and all who emphasize the 'negative stage' would deny; though if all aesthetic creation overcomes a negative or passive stage of inexpressiveness they might have accepted it and so destroyed the distinction.

aesthetic act.[1] Every creative exercise of the imagination makes beautiful that which before was not so; but more or less effort, more or less genius, may have gone to the transformation. When our success consists in the expression of volitions long blind, the contemplation of things hitherto only desired or avoided, we are apt to indicate this degree of depth by inventing a class of 'romantic' beauties. But when the spirit through its expressive activity conquers for free contemplation those obscure and mastering impulses which actually repel aesthetic treatment and cling to their ugliness, then the resulting beauty has a poignancy, a depth or richness, resonant of the discords that have been resolved in it, and we experience pre-eminently that 'exaltation and even rapture', that joy of battle which has given rise to the name sublime.[2] The only reconciliation of the contradictory theories and antinomian instances of sublimity is the recognition that what beauty has therein overcome is simply ugliness or inexpressiveness in the elements which it transforms. This inexpressiveness may arise from bewildering size, from stupefying danger, from strangeness or from the mere monotonous familiarity of our daily uses. If beauty can conquer these it does not miss its reward. So there is something sublime in the beggars of Rembrandt, the dwarfs of Velasquez, the grotesques of Dürer, the slums or suburbs of Whistler. It is not, as the Kantians supposed, because his reason surpasses every standard of sense, nor because he might be just though the heavens should pass away, that man glories in the contemplation of what to every practical instinct is engrossingly repulsive. It is because he has succeeded in contemplating it; – a spiritual enfranchisement prior to those of morality and philosophy but not less in itself valuable. *Fiat pulchritudo ruat coelum* is the true motto of sublimity, in which is revealed to us in its acutest paradox the 'miracle *κατ' ἐξοχήν* [*par excellence*] of our nature,'[3] that to will and to know are the two manifestations of one spirit.

[1] Schleiermacher, *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*: 'Sublimity and tenderness are only the vanishing-points of the line of beauty.' Where beauty becomes sentimentality.

[2] Weisse, *System der Aesthetik als Wissenschaft von der Idee der Schonheit*, pp. 150–5: 'Sublimity is not something opposed to beauty but the working out of the opposition between beauty and its infinite negation.'

[3] Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, iii, § 51.

Not unhappily did the father of all reflection on the Sublime select to illustrate it the great type of aesthetic intuition. 'God said: Let there be light. And there was light.'[1]

## NOTE ADDED TO SECOND EDITION

The Russian word for sublimity seems to be *prostòr*, which denotes vastness untouched by terror: 'space, far vistas, broad rivers, steppes, golden cornfields waving from horizon to horizon'. Mountains are mere obstacles to *prostòr*. – Jarintzov, *The Russians and their Language*, pp. 25, 69.

[1] Περὶ ὕψους, ix. 4. Longinus *On Sublimity* and *Genesis*, i. 3.

CHAPTER X

# Formal and Expressive Beauty

1. The traditional distinction between pattern and expression. 2. Formal beauty is sometimes regarded as more austere, sometimes as more trivial or esoteric, sometimes as more emotional. Sometimes both form and expression are opposed to realism. 3. All decoration is expression and all expression decorative. 4. Poetic, plastic or musical form *is* the expression of what is otherwise inexpressible. 5. Form and expression cannot be separated without sacrificing beauty.

1. Already in Plato and Aristotle we found suggested a problem, which became insistent in our consideration of Kant and Nietzsche, as to that distinction between formal and representative beauty which proved so troublesome to Wordsworth, Coleridge and lesser critics at all times. 'The end of poetry is to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure; . . . Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods, and in a less excited state, cannot but have a great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intermixture of ordinary feeling and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion.'[1] This view of metre as a sobering element is not as it stands convincing; it reminds us of Dryden's comparison of rhyme to 'clogs upon a high-ranging spaniel',[2] and we are told a page later that metre 'will be found greatly to contribute to impart passion to the words'. Finally we get a glimpse of the true identity of form and content, passion and

[1] Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.
[2] Preface to *The Rival Ladies*. Cf. pp. 60, 62, *supra*.

expression: 'The emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation is gradually produced and does itself actually exist in the mind.' Plato also is aware of the double effect by which the soul is soothed and encouraged, and in a passage in the *Philebus*,[1] already referred to, he explains what is to be understood by formal beauty in language strikingly like that of Kant.

It is a beauty found in shapes that he is now trying to describe to us, but not as most people would expect, in those of any living creatures or their likeness; rather – the argument goes on, not uninfluenced by his odd geometrical bias – in right lines and circumferences; for these are beautiful not with reference to anything else, but in their own original and eternal essence. So, too, with colours and with such sounds as are smooth and clear, uttering a single pure tone; these are beautiful not relatively, but in their proper selves.

And what he means by the contrasted relative beauty is made clear, again almost in Kant's words, by the description of animal beauty as having reference to use;[2] though in this too a formal or absolute grace and rhythm, alongside its adequacy to purpose, might be discovered.[3] Indeed certain sculptors are traditionally credited with a concentration upon some such element;[4] and its distinction, not only to differentiate the decorative and imitative arts,[5] but within the sphere of the latter, and of nature, is a commonplace of aesthetic criticism. For we hear not only of the purely formal beauties of a Persian carpet, which Plato himself, by a likely enough legend,[6] may have been susceptible, but of the pure line in

[1] 51. Cf. p. 33, note, *supra*.

[2] *Rep.*, 601*d*.

[3] Ibid., 401*a*. Ἔστι δέ γέ που πλήρης (εὐαρμοστίας καὶ εὐσχημοσύνης καὶ εὐρυθμίας) ἡ τῶν σωμάτων φύσις καὶ ἡ τῶν ἄλλων φυτῶν. [The nature of animal bodies and other organisms is full, as it were, of adaptation and elegance and proportion.]

[4] Πυθαγόραν, πρῶτον δοκοῦντα ῥυθμοῦ καὶ συμμετρίας ἐστοχάσθαι. Diog. Laert., viii. 47. [Pythagoras seems first to have aimed at rhythm and symmetry in sculpture.] '(Myron) numerosior in arte quam Polycletus et in symmetria diligentior.' Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, xxxiv.

[5] Ruskin, *Two Paths*.

[6] Diog. Laert., vi. 26.

a statue or a picture, of colour harmonies, of regular though inexpressive features, and of poems in assonance; and the formal or expressive nature of music and of dancing has been a pitched battlefield both between the adherents of distinct methods such as Bach's or Wagner's, the bacchante's or the ballerina's, and between the rival analysts of a common master.

The distinction is first and most crudely drawn as one between rhythm and imitation,[1] but as soon as we see that it occurs as much in nature as in art, we have to substitute for the second term some wider one such as 'expression'; and once this is done we are face to face with the problem whether a beauty that is expressive can be distinguished from one which is not, or which is so in a different sense.[2]

2. Plato is credited with a moralistic bias in rejecting the imitation of actions and passions for an austerer beauty of pure form and order. He has been believed when he implied that here – in contemplating figures which symbolize, if they are not identical with, the objects of geometrical concern – the cold intellect will be untroubled with those movements of the blood which art so dangerously stirs by the presentation of human joys and griefs, and

[1] Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1448*b*, 4, and 1450*b*, 39. 'Beauty consists in a certain size and arrangement of parts', where the first condition suggests Kant's sublimity and the second his formal beauty, while 'imitation' corresponds to his adherent beauty. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, i. quaest. 5, art. 4: 'Pulchrum in debita proportione consistit.' Yet he opens a loophole for expressionism by continuing 'quia sensus delectatur in rebus debite proportionatis *sicut in sibi similibus*' (cf. the passage from the *Timaeus* quoted on p. 185) and by the statement in another context that '(membrorum) dispositio naturae conveniens est pulchritudo', *1a, 2ae*, quaest. 54, art. 1.

[2] Cf. Bosanquet (*History of Aesthetics*, ch. i and p. 372, 391), who distinguishes 'characteristic or individual' expressiveness from a general or abstract expressiveness which is merely its condition.

The author of 'Beauty and Expression' (*Edinburgh Review*, October 1908) maintains the distinction of form and expression rigidly, with some criticisms of *Einfühlung*, which, however, except in points of detail, seem based on misunderstanding. He quotes a prophetic remark of Herder that 'the beauty of a line is movement, and the beauty of movement expression'; cites Alison as the father of expressionism (*Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste*), and ascribes to Payne Knight's *Analytical Enquiry* the origin of Lipps' distinction between *Einfühlung* and Association, which Alison had ignored.

Alison's associationism is, of course, crude. But his criticism of the still cruder formalistic theories, such as Hogarth's Serpentine Line, was at the time valuable.

which, thus fostered, will make our statesman a feeble warrior both in peace and war. Mohammedan and Hebrew legislators seem on this point to have been of his mind, but Western puritanism, with some iconoclastic exceptions, has been, perhaps not less plausibly, of an opposite persuasion. Among ourselves it is the dignity and seriousness of its subject which redeems art from any accusation of trifling or frivolity; if it were not for a profound religious, philosophical or social import, the preoccupation with beauty would be denounced by all our teachers, from Sidney to Ruskin and from Hegel to Mr Shaw, as a frittering away of ourselves upon a merely sensuous luxury. Nor less by its defenders has the so-called formal side of beauty been thus contrasted with one subordinate to the ends of morality and instruction. 'Art for art's sake' was tortured into the warcry of a sect which prided itself upon its dexterity, and upon disconcerting the philistine by its neglect of edifying content for a curious felicity in metre, in filigree and in texture.

Nietzsche, in an opposite direction, and with a less superficial analysis, has yet identified music and dancing, conceived as purely unrepresentative arts, with all that emotional intensity which Plato so profoundly mistrusted; and has opposed it to the calming and bracing consolations of a narrative and plastic beauty.

The problem as it concerns art would appear to have been confused by the fact that two extreme parties, the expressionists, who are all for soul, and the formalists, who are all for patterns, have not infrequently joined hands against the centre, as one of philistine indifference, which is all for realism. But in truth the alliance was a natural one. A common enemy brought out their essential community of interest, 'for soul *is* form and doth the body make'.[1] (Spenser.)

[1] 'It would be truer to say that the expression *is* the completed feeling; for the feeling is not fully felt till it is expressed, and in being expressed it is still felt but in a different way. What the act of expression does is to fix and distinguish it finally; it then, and then only, becomes *a* determinate feeling. In the same way the consciousness which we express when we have found the 'right word' is not the same as our consciousness before we found it; so that it is not strictly correct to call the word the expression of what we meant before we found it. . . . What is absolutely unexpressed and inexpressible is nothing. We can only describe it potentially and by anticipation. It cannot enter into any human life until it has become articulate in *some* way, though not necessarily in words' (*Philosophical Remains of R. L. Nettleship*, i, p. 132).

*Or say there's beauty with no soul at all –*
*(I never saw it – put the case the same)*
*If you get simple beauty and nought else,*
*You get about the best thing God invents:*
*That's somewhat: and you'll find the soul you have missed*
*Within yourself when you return him thanks.*[1]

So often as the plain critic complains that a predella of Duccio or the *notan* of Sesshu is unlifelike, or that a phrase of Mallarmé has no meaning, he is apt to find arrayed against him, not too critical now of each other's language, both those who defend it as exquisitely decorative and those who dwell upon its haunting suggestion.

3. It is often said that the torsos of ancient sculpture have gained in pure beauty what they have lost in expressiveness; indeed an ingenious aesthete was accustomed to hang his photographs of sculpture upside down, lest his appreciation of their design should be disturbed by a human significance. But apart from the objection that even in arabesque not vertically symmetrical there is an up and down, it may be answered to these paradoxes of anti-expressionism that it would be too strange a coincidence if, of all the infinite combinations of curve and plane conceivable, that which, for some mysterious other reason, has been found most often decoratively beautiful should chance to be the express and admirable form of man. It is very likely that a given artist, tempted by the patron, the flesh or the devil, may have marred a beautiful body with a sentimental head or a theatric gesture; it is probable that our own preoccupation with practical uses may draw a film across our contemplative eye; but when men deny that beauty is expressive they mean no more than that this beauty, which expresses this feeling, is not that other which expresses that, nor the ugliness which really expresses nothing but instead argues or desires.

4. Professor Saintsbury maintains[2] that in the lines,

*Our noisy years seem moments in the being*
*Of the eternal silence,* (Wordsworth)

[1] Browning.

[2] *History of English Prosody*, iii, pp. 74–77.

the beauty of the sound is quite 'independent of the meaning', while A. C. Bradley[1] holds that it is almost wholly in the meaning. Such a cause is not for us to settle. Both disputants are clearly in the right and Mr Bradley has the advantage of knowing it. But even if he had omitted, as I believe he should, the qualifying 'almost', he could not have proved my position more clearly than does Professor Saintsbury when he says that the meaning of the passage can be exactly expressed thus:

Our { noisy / loud-sounding / clamorous } twelvemonths appear minutes (seconds) in the existence of the unending soundlessness.

This is only the meaning of the poetry when it is read as if it were a ready reckoner; and such meaning only affects the poetic meaning so far as when, tired or stupid, we may not be able wholly to forget it. What is sung cannot be said; for it is exactly the *meaning* of words which is altered by a change of tone, and the expression of a face by a change of line or tinge of colour.[2] No doubt the passage, well recited, would have an appreciable amount of meaning to a listener who knew no English, if he were familiar with European intonation. But if it were recited by one so ignorant of the words as to be uncertain if it were a curse or an advertisement, even the best pronunciation could give little pleasure; and in any case the residuum of beauty would be a residuum of meaning. Professor Saintsbury himself in another place has ingeniously shown how a purely 'formal' change can alter the whole emotional tone of a verse;[3] and it

[1] *Poetry for Poetry's Sake* (Oxford Lectures).

[2] Cf. *supra*, p. 117 and note.

[3] *History of English Prosody*, ii, p. 277. He transposes the last words in the second and third lines of Waller's

*Say, lovely dream! where couldst thou find*
*Shades to counterfeit that* face*;*
*Colours of this glorious* kind
*Come not from any mortal place,*

Cf. Professor Gilbert Murray's remarks (*Studies of the English Association*, iii) on the emotional effect by the form of stanza in –

is always the whole emotional tone of a poem which is the meaning. If any disciple of his should object that in this case we had better abandon the term expression, and, so long as we claim that only the poem can express its meaning, admit that it expresses and means nothing, for if we do not know what is to be expressed until we get the expression, we shall not then know if it is the expression of it: to such a one we must reply in words like those of Socrates: 'Meno, this is a sophistic argument you are bringing up – that a man cannot seek (the expression of) either what he knows or what he does not know. For he would not seek (to express) what he already knows – for he knows it and has no need of further search (for its expression) – nor yet, as you say, of what he does not know, for he does not know what to seek (to express).'[1]

Professor de Sélincourt has described the identity of form and expression in the delicate damascene-work of *The Faerie Queene*, showing how a slight variation from the normal type of line expresses the subtlest grades of feeling, as in –

*Come hither, come hither, O come hastily*;

or in –

*When forth from virgin bowre she comes in th' early morne.*

Here, he remarks, we have examples of the figures noted by Puttenham (*The Arte of English Poetrie*, xix) as 'both auricular and sensible, by which all the words and clauses are made as well tunable to the ear as stirring to the mind'. But the moment that they cease to be 'sensible' or expressive, and remain merely 'auricular' or formal, Spenser 'parodies his poetic self; the inspiration is gone; and those devices which are the natural and inevitable expression of his mode

*Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,*
*Star inwrought,*
*Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day,*
*Kiss her until she be wearied out;*
*Then wander o'er city and sea and land*
*Touching all with thine opiate wand;*
*Come, long sought.*

(Shelley, *To Night*)

[1] Plato, *Meno*, 80.

of thought seem little better than the threadbare artifice of a cunning metrical trickster.'[1] This applies no less to the other harmony of prose. There too, as in Ruskin and Kingsley, a marked rhythm may excellently express feeling; whereas a blank verse not really so justified is not assimilated by the general texture of the style and at once suggests sentimentality or rhetoric – that is to say, affectation. The airs of Guido Reni, the graces of Luini, classical design and gorgeous colour may all become 'figures spectacular but not sensible'; there is no quality of art which, without feeling, is not a frigid mannerism.[2]

The aesthetic consciousness demands that we should hold together the two complementary beliefs: that all beauty is expressive, for just so far as 'nonsense verses' are beautiful they express feeling; and that beauty is not the aggregate of two incoherent elements,[3] form and meaning, or, as is sometimes suggested, of two methods of expression, one literal or prosaic, the other suggestive and emotional, but organically one. Mr F. W. H. Myers[4] made this false distinction, though he almost succeeded in obliterating it. 'In poetry of the first order almost every word . . . continues to be an articulate sound and a logical step in the argument, but it becomes also a musical sound and a centre of emotional force.' 'What is meant by the vague praise bestowed on Virgil's unequalled style is practically this, that he has been, perhaps, more successful than any other poet in fusing together the expressed and the suggested emotion; . . . his thoughts seem to come to us on wings of melodies prepared for them from the foundation of the world.' This is only prevented from getting right by having started wrong. The *Aeneid* was never an imperialist manifesto and so has no need of being recommended by an accompaniment, however melodious. Suggestion and expression are artistically identical, for *in* poetry words have *only* a poetical meaning; it is needless to fuse elements if from the founda-

[1] *Poetical Works of Spenser*, Introduction, pp. lxiii–lxvi.

[2] Cf. Περὶ ὕψους, iii, on παρένθυρσος and τὸ μειρακιῶδες. [Slapstick and Sobstuff?]

[3] 'Pulchritudo est partium congruentia *cum* quadam coloris suavitate' (St Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, xxii. 19). This derives from Plotinus.

[4] *Essays, Classical*, pp. 113–15.

tion of the world, or even from their own conception, they were and are inseparate.

5. Criticism which takes such a distinction seriously always becomes incoherent. Where the abstraction of the two aspects can be pressed furthest, as in saying that Tennyson sometimes excels in form, Browning in expression, we intend in both cases an artistic censure. In the greatest works of art and the greatest beauties of nature, in Shakespeare, in Velasquez, in Beethoven, the opposition simply evaporates. A sunset sometimes expresses emotion, and expresses it by means of a luminous coloured pattern; but which should be called the formal and which the expressive elements I am unable to determine. Nor is it merely that we are dazzled out of analysis by these great ones. There is the same inviolacy in the more minute perfections of a Chardin, a Vermeer or a rough opal. For to be unanalyzable and, therefore, save by the poet, indescribable, is the aim of art and the fact of beauty. 'Every appearance of nature corresponds to some state of mind, and that state of mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture.'[1] 'Man is impelled to divide and arrange time according to some kind of rhythm, space by some kind of symmetrical outline . . . The world becomes akin to us through this power to see in form the joy and sorrow of existence that they hide; there is no shape so coy that our fancy cannot sympathetically enter into it. Unquestionably the vividness of these perceptions is increased by our abiding remembrance of the activities of our own bodies.'[2]

In the *Timaeus* Plato seems to solve the problem, as he had raised it in the passage already quoted from the *Philebus*:

'God devised sight as a gift for us, that watching the orbits which have been described by reason in the heavens, we might apply them to the revolutions of our own consciousness; for they are akin to these, so far as what is imperturbable can be to what is perturbed.'[3]

'Passion itself imitates order, and the order resulting produces a

[1] Emerson, 'Infinite Beauty', *Miscellanies*, p. 24.

[2] Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*, v. ii; cf. Lipps: 'We feel our own activity *in* the column.' See next chapter and p. 62, *supra*.

[3] *Supra*, p. 178; *Philebus*, 51; *Timaeus*, 47.

pleasurable passion, and thus it elevates the mind by making its feelings the object of its reflexion. So likewise whilst it recalls the sights and sounds that had accompanied the occasions of the original passions, poetry impregnates them with an interest not their own by means of the passions, and yet tempers the passion by the calming power which all distinct images exert on the human soul.'[1]

In all that is beautiful there is form which is always the expression of feeling.[2] Passion inexpressive and formless is the new wine of animal barbarism: polished but passionless verse is a sediment left by art in the old bottles of culture.

## NOTE ADDED TO SECOND EDITION

If the usual interpretation of *Poetics* iv be right, Aristotle went to the root of the matter in giving as the two fundamental causes of poetry (or, as we should say, methods of expression) the instinct for imitation and that for harmony and rhythm. Bywater's interpretation, that the two instincts are love of imitating and love of imitations, is not attractive: they would not cause poetry, and the distinction seems trifling. He cites about sixty renderings of *κάθαρσις τῶν παθημάτων*,, so I venture one more: the aesthetic experience is the anaesthetic of passion, that is its tranquillizer.

[1] Coleridge, *On Poesy and Art.*

[2] Cf. Pater, *Style*, and *Giorgione* (the passage on music as the type of the arts).

CHAPTER XI

# The Theories of *Einfühlung*

1. Beauty is described as 'our life in the object'. 2. The value of this is ascribed to the escape from self. 3. A comparison of this view with the expressionist theory.

1. As we have already seen, Croce is at pains to differentiate his own aesthetic theory from one to which it superficially bears some resemblance, and which in various forms may be said to be the most commonly accepted of our time. This we have referred to as the theory of *Einfühlung*, a term for whose translation English writers have nothing better to offer us than introjection or Empathy. Its chief exponent is Lipps.[1] The doctrine may be summarily stated as follows. 'Aesthetic pleasure is an enjoyment of *our own* activity *in* an object.' This statement, apparently a contradiction in terms, is explained to mean that we enjoy ourselves as objectified, or enjoy an object so far as we live in it. 'Activity' is distinguished from such a thing as colour, which is 'a quality of objects', or hunger, which is a 'state of my body', as being a quality of nothing but the self.

In conscious imitation it is said that we *have an idea* of the feeling of activity in another, and *experience* our own, but in the aesthetic experience there is no such distinction. 'I feel myself actually executing the other's movement,' and this differs from spontaneous, unimitative movement, because the latter is an activity of the whole real self, the former only of the 'ideal', contemplative, non-practical

[1] *Archiv für die gesammte Psychologie*, i, pp. 185–204. *Einfühlung, innere Nachahmung und Organ-empfindung*, iv, pp. 465–519. *Weiteres zur Einfühlung*. Cf. the same author's *Raumästhetik* and *Psychologie des Schönen*. My analysis is mainly of the articles in the *Archiv*. For a summary of works of this school see *Edinburgh Review*, October 1908.

self. 'I feel this contemplative self active,' and this must not be confused with thinking of activity. It is a real activity but not practical. Whether this aesthetic imitation issues in bodily movement, or, for various practical reasons, remains 'inner' makes no difference.

Now this activity of the self does not consist in muscular feelings, either those I actually undergo in looking, for instance, at a statue, or those I should undergo if I took its attitude, but in such feelings as 'Force, Pride, Will.' Indeed, if in observing a posture we are compelled to think how comfortable or uncomfortable it must be, the aesthetic sympathy, for example with the trouble expressed by a face, is diminished.

We are warned against confounding this doctrine of *Einfühlung* with Association,[1] it is a more intimate, more thorough fusion[2] of the two terms of the relation; for though I can associate with a sensible thing the fact that someone loves or hates it, it would not thereby *express*[3] these feelings. 'In perceiving a certain gesture I experience the tendency to a certain inner condition called grief, and this tendency is intimately connected with the perception by a law of my nature not further analyzable.' This tendency, it is emphasized, does not arise immediately out of my own sad experience, but out of the perception of an object. The physical object symbolizes or expresses a psychical activity which must be 'lived' (*erlebt*) not merely 'thought'.

2. The next step is to explain our great satisfaction in this sympathetic activity, especially our enjoyment of what expresses pain, sorrow and wickedness. We are told that the joy of *Einfühlung* consists in being lifted, even by sympathy with another's grief, out of ourselves, the 'ideal' or contemplative self being actually identified with its object, not merely having ideas of it. 'It is not Faust's despair but my sympathy with it that pleases me.' It is, then, not with a

[1] So Lipps rejects Witasek's formula 'Mitvorstellung eines psychologischen in einem sinnlichen Gegenstand'. [The union in consciousness of a merely psychological and an external stimulus.] But I am not happy in translating this jargon.

[2] '*Innigkeit, Verschmelzung.*'

[3] The italics are mine. 'Express' is defined as 'mean, try to communicate, exist for the sake of'.

floating activity or passion without context that we really sympathize – these are said to be neither expressible nor communicable – but with a personality to which they belong. And it seems to follow that we shall only enjoy sympathizing with a personality which we ethically admire or at least in some way approve (*billigen*).[1]

It is sufficient that the personality with which we thus sympathize should possess 'aesthetic reality', that is to say it may be purely imaginary. Or rather no judgement is passed, no question raised as to its existence in any other way, for the judgement that the object is *only* imaginary, that is to say has been arbitrarily constructed by myself, cancels its aesthetic reality.

How can I thus be active *in* an external object? We are told in reply that even our own activities are not objects of our consciousness till they are past; but since the past self is identical with the present, these past activities are not only known but actually experienced. The past self is both thought and experienced, it is both '*ego*' and '*object*'. And if this can be so with the self, it is argued that it can also occur with other selves; the psychical states 'connected with' a perceived object can actually be experienced.[2]

Finally we are told that worth, as distinct from pleasure, is a property only of psychical activity, and a feeling of worth is a feeling of free activity, which is pleasant. Aesthetic feeling is the feeling of 'self-activity in an object of sense'. 'All consciousness that there is a psychical existence outside me originates in *Einfühlung*, in the objectification of a feeling of my own aroused in me by another's expression of life.' It is to feel *in* objects, not about them; to strive in the pillar, not against it; to laugh in the blue sky, not at it. It is ulti-

[1] *Archiv*, iv, pp. 473, 484. 'Die Unlust etwa die einem blossen Irrthum entstammt, die sinnlose, in keiner Weise gerechtfertigte Unlust, der blinder Aerger, oder dergleichen, weekt in mir, vorausgesetzt dass mir dieser Grund der Unlust bekannt ist, kein Mitleid.'

'Die Gebärde des dummen Hochmutes ist ästhetisch nicht erfreulich.' This restriction and the difficulty of applying this part of the theory to lifeless objects are important.

[The sort of displeasure aroused in me by a mere error, a senseless, unjustifiable rage, or the like, causes me no sympathy, provided the occasion of the displeasure is known to me. The gestures of insane conceit are not aesthetically pleasing.]

[2] I do not defend or indeed understand either the language here or the argument, but believe that it fairly represents, in brief, the doctrine I am describing.

mate that the apprehension of an object is the tendency to a certain inner activity; they are one act.

3. The last words bring us back to Croce. Had he been content to say that every intuition *tends* to become expression; that only when we rest in an intuition, because it expresses our own mental states, without passing on to action or to thought, is intuition perfected, we might have been able to follow him. But it is just this point, no doubt, in which he would claim to differ fundamentally from Lipps, though he quotes,[1] apparently with approval, very similar language.

In all other respects Croce's account of the matter seems to me certainly more intelligible and so far as I can judge more true. The *Einfühlung* theory attempts to solve the paradoxes of the aesthetic problem by offering us bare contradictions, which it endeavours to render palatable by metaphor. Indeed even in the one point I have mentioned the doctrine is only more acceptable than Croce's by erring – as I think – less courageously. Like Croce Lipps does sometimes[2] seem to hold that we cannot even become aware, say, of a moving object, still less of a flying bird, until we 'project into it our contemplative self', though elsewhere[3] he distinguishes the experience of qualities in an object from that of our own activity projected into the object.

Similarly we seem to be told both that the vicarious activity of any *Einfühlung* is in itself valuable and pleasant, and also that this can only be so when the activity with which we identify ourselves is one that we should enjoy or approve in ourselves. And again there seems a contradiction, closely connected with the last, in saying both that the self actually goes through (*erlebt*) the experiences presented to it – does not merely think them – and that it is only the contemplative, ideal, non-practical self which does this. Granted that there is a very real difficulty which these paradoxes are intended to describe, they are surely little better than confusing metaphors. I cannot attach any precise meaning to such phrases as' being active in a pillar' nor find any truth in the statement that when I

[1] *Estetica*, p. 480, from Conrad Fiedler, *Der Ursprung der künstlerischen Thätigkeit*, 'To pass immediately from perception to intuitive expression' is said to be the artist's distinguishing gift.

[2] *Archiv*, iv, p. 518, etc. [3] Ibid., i.

enjoy a seagull's flight or the plunge of a cataract 'I feel myself actually executing these movements'. I do not see how either my 'practical' or my 'contemplative self' could do so, and still less do I see how such a formula could be plausibly applied to a sunset, a fugue or the smell of a clover field. We have here nothing but an attempt to explain in figurative language an unconscious process by which some beautiful objects may have come to be so. For a theory – which must be a universal theory – of aesthetic, nothing is lost in profundity and something gained in comprehensibility and comprehensiveness by contenting ourselves with a word which Lipps uses but almost immediately drops; by saying that beauty is expression. Colours, shapes, sounds, smells, feelings, acquire for us a special value and become the sources of an intense pleasure when they interpret for us, by giving them form and pressure, impulses and aversions in our practical nature which can only thus become the objects of contemplation.

The best English variant of this theory with which I am acquainted is that of Professor Mitchell.[1] He describes the experience of beauty as 'absorption in an object for its own sake', explaining that we can only be so absorbed in an individual, and that to find a thing individual is to read our own feelings into it immediately and unconsciously. In the same work[2] Professor Mitchell disposes of those varieties of the 'Empathy' theory which, in opposition to Lipps, describe the aesthetic experience as the attribution to things of our motor and organic sensations in perceiving them. He quite sufficiently appreciates the germ of truth – as I think it – which has given vogue to these varying and inconsistent dogmas; the truth namely that we can find expressed in music or in painting only what we have ourselves somehow experienced. But it might have been thought that his trenchant and caustic criticisms of certain 'physiological' interpretations of this would have prevented even such a hydra of mythology from raising another head.

[1] *Structure and Growth of the Mind*, pt. ii, especially pp. 149, 168. On p. 146 (note) he notices the ambiguity of 'imitation' in *Innere Nachahmung*.

[2] Pp. 502–4.

CHAPTER XII

# Conclusion

I. Summary. 1. The method of this book. 2. The evolution of aesthetics. 3. Historical retrospect.

II. Suggestions. 1. We are led to 'expression'. Is all expression beautiful? 2. All expression is beautiful, though not all intuition need be. Suggested implications of this conclusion. 3. It is likely to be criticized both as mechanical and as mystical. It may plead the support of experience and authority. 4. Our interest in art and nature.

III. Result. All aesthetics point to expression. This does not mean either symptom or symbol. There is no conscious distinction between what expresses and what is expressed. The value of such a conclusion.

## I. SUMMARY

1. I believe that a greater amount of truth is contained in Croce's *Estetica* than in any other philosophy of beauty that I have read. But its method, both in theory and history, is too brilliantly cursory to be conciliating; and it does not succeed in curing the dazed scepticism that in aesthetic, even more than in other departments of philosophy, often arises from the survey of so many systems, each in itself so plausible, which arrive at apparently contradictory results because they have concealed incompatible presuppositions.

I have therefore endeavoured to confine myself to one of the two possible methods, both of which are ultimately necessary. I have tried to criticize various theories in respect of their harmony with those facts of aesthetic consciousness which it was their business to explain, and not at all from their compatibility with the general philosophic positions of their authors or from the truth of those

positions. In this way I have hoped to show that divergent systems are all intelligible attempts to state the same experience. The philosophic presuppositions I have indeed been obliged in some degree to consider, in order to account for the divergency of these statements, but I have not treated them for their own sake. To do so would have been to construct both a philosophy and a history of philosophies. As a result I am well aware that many metaphysical ghosts slumber uneasily in the surrounding shadows, but it seemed wiser to let them lie than to conjure without any confidence of laying them.

2. There seems no necessity to maintain that speculation on our subject has exhibited an unfluctuating line of advance towards greater truth.[1] Such a view would only have plausibility if applied within a continuous tradition like that of European civilization, and so far as each writer was aware of the work of his predecessors. Even then its demonstration is sometimes achieved only by neglecting those thinkers who have not surpassed previous work on the direct line leading to still further successes. We do not indeed expect even in the life of an individual philosopher, and while his mind is still unimpaired, a consecutive progress; he turns into many blind alleys which help him towards his destination only by the assurance that they do not lead there, and he often attempts short cuts which emerge upon a part of the road he has already traversed. It is not because it is later in time that a man can claim his theory to be truer than others, but only in so far as he has understood, perhaps almost accepted, those others, found them wanting and taken them up into his own. When he has done this he may know that from its own angle of vision, as an answer to the particular questions it has necessarily asked itself, it contains more truth than they. An ultimate philosophy, like moral perfection, is a chimera. Problems, like temptations, will be always with us, for though in both spheres there may be progress, this very progress poses new problems or temptations of its own. Yet progress happens and we share in it so far as by

[1] Cf. Bosanquet, *History of Aesthetic*; Croce, *Problemi*, i: 'All the aesthetic systems . . belong not only to every age but, to a certain extent, to every thinker and every man'; and *Breviario di Estetica*, p. 12.

understanding the problems of the past and their solutions we prepare for the solution of our own.

3. Beauty, and not art only, is as Plato supposed, an imitation; if by this be meant merely that, though it resides in appearances, that is, in objects of sense or imagination, it resides in them only by virtue of their reference to something other than themselves namely feelings (*μίμησις παθῶν*). And he was right in accusing it of flattering passion, if the charge meant that only by their reference to emotion and their expression of it can sensible objects acquire beauty. Art, as he was the first to discover, is not philosophy and not morality; in a finite life it is their rival, but he was justified in calling it both their servant and their enemy, for it expresses good and bad desires, wise and foolish enthusiasms, impartially.

But art in creating beauty does not simply seek pleasure, though, as Aristotle saw, it attains its proper pleasure. And this proper pleasure is our satisfaction in that theoretic triumph by which our imagination creates a convincing picture, not historically true but coherent, individual, necessary, *imitative* of *action* and yet *rhythmical*; by the order or form, which it thus imposes on passions, purging them away so that as artists we have no longer blind impulses of lust or shrinking, but a purified, an *ex-pressed* emotion. But all this is liable to misunderstanding, is indeed misunderstood by its authors. Against the growing rationalism of philosophy the romantic author of the *Περὶ ὕψους* must protest that beauty consists not only in order but in greatness, not in smoothness only but in passion. And the neo-Platonists, defining beauty as a matter to which mind has given form, must identify the beauty of art and nature, and discriminate that both copy not sensible reality but something that is 'above' reality – with truth if this can mean that both are indifferent to the irrelevant distinction of physical existence. And concurrently, against the sensualistic degradations natural to such a rationalism, it had to be insisted, even to the verge of empty mysticism, that beauty is a creation of the spirit which is in all men one, that it is the language, the expression, the word, by which individuals, if naturally distinct, are first supernaturally or miraculously capable of ideal unity.

But all such thinking had to be done over again with greater accuracy, for the truths of the heathen were only splendid falsehoods. For good and for evil the legacy of scholasticism to the Renaissance was an intellectual Roman empire, which understood by dividing and when it had made an abstraction called it truth. Beauty is knowledge, but confused knowledge; or morality, but pleasant morality; or desire, but refined desire; or it is sentiment. It is truth – or again perfection – manifest to sense, the idea of the species, the individually characteristic; it is association, or unity in variety, or the *je ne sais quoi*; it is an inkling of God's beneficent creation, or a relaxation of our finer tissues. Many of these scattered threads are picked up by Kant to be woven into a system whose value depended so much less than he supposed upon its systematization. Here it need only be repeated that for him beauty was not in things, but consisted in a knowledge universally communicable yet not logically true; a knowledge of those appearances which, without any idea of a purpose in their arrangement, put our apprehensive faculties into such harmonious play as must seem the result of a designed accord. And it is true that our satisfaction in beauty may be described as the triumph of the knowing spirit which finds means for expressing, and therefore possibility for communicating, its own nature, in sensible forms which it recognizes as after all akin to it – that is to say, expressive.

From Kant's station the advance is pushed along two roads at first divergent but destined to reunite when either flank has been thoroughly reconnoitred.

On one side, Hegel, by definitely destroying the distinction between *pulchritudo vaga* and *pulchritudo adhaerens* and thus consolidating the spiritual realm of beauty, is able to make good its frontier against the insidious appropriations of morality and usefulness in one direction and those of the abstract understanding in the other. Beauty is the sensible expression of the concrete idea, the form which all spirit and nothing but spirit takes.

Schopenhauer, on the other side, was conciliating those who with good cause had been disaffected by the cold and intellectual aspect of Kantian analysis or Hegelian absolutism. The most obvious note

of beauty is passion. The subject of art is emotion and emotion is its effect; yet it arises only from mastery and ends in calm. The pessimistic paradox of joy in the release from will by the contemplation of will is at least an effort to hold together these two truths.

## II. SUGGESTIONS

1. Beauty is always expression. But is expression always beauty? Must we not limit this at least to the expression of feeling? Croce would answer that beauty always expresses feeling, but that this is no limitation.[1] Thought indeed is properly criticized as true or false, but before this decision can be made, before even a thesis can be asserted, Croce would argue, there must be a vision expressive of emotion, and indeed many visions from which this one is selected to be asserted as true. In any case the selection, the judgement, cannot but be accompanied or followed by feeling; feelings of satisfaction in achievement, of attraction, or repulsion by the result. All things, then, of which we are conscious can be regarded in an aesthetic aspect, that is, as expressing emotion, though some can also be regarded in another; but we found ourselves unable to understand or accept Croce's contention that nothing ever becomes the object of an individual consciousness except as beautiful – that is to say, as expressing volitional states which that individual has already had.

2. By sacrificing as unproven this attractive identification of intuition with expression we have renounced immediate possession of a philosphy of spirit so completely symmetrical as his; but our mistrust of his arguments is confirmed by the greater harmony which we thus seem able to attain between our theory and the facts of experience. For by allowing that we can become aware of real or

[1] *Breviario*, p. 53. I was myself formerly inclined to the view that beauty was always the expression of a joy in life, the immediate, indemonstrable conviction that 'there is a soul of goodness in things evil', even if that soul be but the savage indignation of the poet lashing vice or defying God. An intuition of some value – hedonistic or moral – was, I thought, the necessary condition of any artistic impulse ('Truth in Art and Religion', *Hibbert Journal*, viii, 2 January 1910). My reading of Croce has convinced me that the *expression* of *any* feeling is beautiful. The joy which I took to be the presupposition of art is really its result. So far as life and activity are always good, the aesthetic activity of expression can never fail of its proper satisfaction.

imaginary objects in which we do not yet express our own desires or aversions, it seems more possible to explain, not only the communication of expressions and the apprehension of ugliness, but also the difference of a dream or listless and incoherent awareness from the aesthetic act.

That of which we are aware, then, is not thereby beautiful; it only becomes so when it is contemplated without practical interest, without scientific abstraction, and without existential judgement, *as* the pure expression of emotion. That all sensible objects and not only works of art seem capable of this imaginative contemplation may suggest to us, as to Kant, Coleridge and their followers, metaphysical hypotheses of the greatest interest; but whether these attract us by their audacity or repel us by their mysticism, we have been led to the position which suggests them simply by the attempt to describe the apparent facts of consciousness. Croce's writings leave us in no doubt as to the criticism he would pass upon such a cardinal defection from his philosophy. In replying to a review by Signor Aliotta[1] he characterizes the separation of expression and intuition as fatal to aesthetics and indeed to philosophy. And in criticizing the *Einfühlung* theory[2] he says: 'In such doctrines we have the conception, on the one side, of things intuited as dead and inanimate, on the other, of the artist's sentiment and personality; and it is then supposed that the artist by some act of magic projects himself into the things, gives them breath and life, and ends by loving and adoring them. But if we start from this distinction it is impossible ever to regain the unity: distinction implies an intellectual operation; and what intellect has divided can only be re-joined or synthesized by the intellect or reason, not by imagination or art. Hence such aesthetic systems of infusion or transfusion – if they escape falling into the antiquated hedonistic theories of conscious illusion, play, or in general something which gives us a pleasant excitement; or into those moralistic theories which consider art as a symbol or allegory of truth and goodness; – cannot, for all their psychology and airs of modernity, escape the fate of the doctrine which makes art a semi-fantastic conception of the world like religion.'

[1] *Problemi*, pp. 480–8. [2] Ibid., p. 21.

3. Evidently the view we are maintaining – of the difference between intuition and expression – risks being regarded as a doctrine like that of Alison,[1] that beautiful forms are those which are associated with agreeable feelings, or as a formula of abstract allegory. But the fact seems to remain that we do come to find beauty in things or visions of which we had long been aware. We come to admire the fashion; and a man we have long thought ugly may, when we learn to read his expression better, come to appear beautiful. It will be replied that this is no more surprising than that an admired person or landscape should by familiarity lose its charm; that this gain or loss of charm depends upon our having hitherto taken or now beginning to take a practical or scientific attitude which precludes the aesthetic interest. But this does not seem true. We may go, and surely have all gone, to see a picture as a picture, moved by some eloquent critic to the expectation of great beauty; we may study it with no other prepossession, and that so carefully as to be able to copy it; and may come away untouched. And yet with the lapse of time and the growth of our own emotional experience or skill in interpretation we may come to find in that very picture a great work of art. Nor is this less true of natural objects.

Croce's objection seems to be that if such a fact were admitted we should be faced by the mystery that natural forms already existing, and of which we are already aware, should come to acquire aesthetic value or expressiveness. If they have such value he holds that they must have had it from the beginning, must have been created by our minds simply to express. An *argumentum ad hominem* would be the attempt already made to show that he has not succeeded in explaining how in that case an expression can be communicated. And in any case it is a dangerous argument that what seems to be a fact cannot be so merely because its explanation is difficult.

The explanation which suggests itself to me personally is one which Croce rejects as mystical, though it commended itself to Kant and Coleridge. It is that just as works of art can come to express to us their maker's meaning only on two conditions: one, that they have been really made, that is to say, really exist, before

[1] *Essays on the Nature and Principles of Taste.*

they express to us, and the other, that they were made to be expressive; so natural objects can come to be naturally and not artificially or allegorically expressive if, though they may have been really created, yet they have been so created as to be expressive.

This is a hypothesis whose establishment or desertion does not affect the alleged fact which we intend it to explain. But I see no reason to dismiss it as mystical or mythical any more than Croce's own doctrine of nature. 'Certainly neither do the stars smile nor is the moon pale with sadness: these are images of the poets. Certainly animals and trees do not reason like men; that, when it is not poetry, is crude anthropomorphism. But nature in its heart aspires to the good and abhors the evil; is wet with tears and palpitating with joy: the universal life is, in every atom, instinct with struggle and with victory.'[1] And in another passage he applies the name 'reality', in the same sense as to our fellow-men, to 'those beings which we called natural – our dogs, our houses, plants, *the earth*.'[2] 'The true philosophic doctrine would be that of an immanent spirit, of which stars and sky, earth and sea, plants and animals, make up the contingent manifestations.'[3]

I do not think that such sayings are necessarily inconsistent with their author's doctrine of the fictitious character of nature as it is conceived in the provisional abstractions of science. But I believe that should he develop them in greater detail – and in particular his vital contention that the world owes its being not to knowledge but to will,[4] and clearly not always the will of him who knows it – the difference between his view and that which we are endeavouring to support might appear less a quarrel between consistent idealism and crude realism, or between a rational philosophy and a religious myth, than a divergence as to the precise meaning and implications of Immanence.

[1] *Pratica*, p. 174.

[2] Ibid., p. 326. The italics are mine.

[3] *Logica*, p. 307.

[4] *Pratica*, p. 205. 'The practical activity is reality itself in its immediateness; no other reality or nature is conceivable besides will-action. . . . In fact, knowledge is knowledge of something; it is the reconstruction of a fact, the ideal recreation of a real creation.' I do not fully grasp the connexion of this with the saying that 'Reality is thought' (*Logica*, p. 354), for though each of these activities implies the other, it is with their distinction that we are here concerned.

4. It will be admitted that in appreciating the art of others, and indeed to some extent in their appreciation of ours, we find a pleasure, strictly perhaps extra-aesthetic, which we do not find in our own unuttered expression, so that some have been tempted to identify beauty with communication. This was described by Kant as the Empirical or Social Interest in the Beautiful.[1] Nor can there be much question that we take a somewhat different though similar pleasure in discovering beauty in nature, whether on our own initiative or on the stimulus of an artist or poet who recalls her. This is what Kant meant by his Intellectual Interest in the Beautiful.[2] He describes it as an interest that nature should at least show some trace, or give some hint of containing a ground for the assumption that there is a designed harmony of its products with a satisfaction of ours which is free from all interest. This last satisfaction is, of course, just that aesthetic one which we explain as our delight in expression, and Kant, somewhat inconsistently with his own failure to reach this position, goes on to speak of natural colours and sounds as 'a kind of language which nature addresses to us', so that 'we interpret the songs of birds as expressing happiness and content', and read in the colour of flowers the image of our own affections. Certainly those who reflect on the experience of beauty are apt, like Wordsworth or Ruskin, to find an added joy in the thought that in the violet and the mountain sunrise, bird-song, and the music of the spheres, what speaks to our heart and rouses there such feeling echoes is itself a heart, though not the heart of any fellow-artist. And this joy, like

[1] *K. d. U.*, § 41, and see Chap. V., especially pp. 70–1, 74, 75, *supra*. Cf. Schiller *Aesthetische Erziehung*, Brief 27; Croce, *Estetica*, p. 140. This 'Interest' is not to be confused with the admiration of cleverness in technique which I described in Chap. II as almost entirely unaesthetic.

[2] Ibid., 42. Cf. Coleridge, *Letters*, p. 243; Wordsworth, *Letters*, vol. i, p. 14: 'My whole soul was turned to him who produced the terrible majesty before me.' *Prelude*, ii. 401; iii. 130; *Excursion*, iv. 1207–29; and especially i. 191–218:

> *his spirit drank*
> *The spectacle: sensation, soul and form*
> *All melted into him; . . .*
> *His mind was a thanksgiving to the power*
> *That made him; it was blessedness and love!*

And cf. the quotations from Schelling on pp. 57–8, *supra*, note 3.

that which arises from the conviction of being put through poetry into communion with a great personality, seems to fuse so immediately in the primary aesthetic satisfaction as to be with difficulty discriminated. Logically, as has been suggested,[1] we might find no less cause for contentment in the fact that nature can be presented to us as beautiful by the artist; or even that reality provides in spatial form, in colour and in resonant vibration the sensible materials by which alone expression seems possible:

> *For nature is made better by no mean*
> *But nature makes that mean.*[2]

And though in both these cases it might be said that we must attribute beauty rather to the artist's imaginative construction or reconstruction than to the inherent quality of the elements he employs, we can reply that a real sunset also is only a possible beauty for our own creative activity; and we might be no less grateful that nature should provide another artist with the materials of expression than that she should do so for ourselves. Yet it is true that gratitude for the expressive capacities of nature is less immediately connected with the beauty of art than with that of scenery, and least of all with the mainly unrepresentative arts of music, architecture, and arabesque, for in all of these our interest is rather for our communion with the original artist: 'He for God only, we for God in him.'

## III. RESULT

If any point can be thought to have emerged from the foregoing considerations it is this: that in the history of aesthetic we may discover a growing consensus of emphasis upon the doctrine that all beauty is the expression of what may be generally called emotion, and that all such expression is beautiful.

Most erroneous aesthetics can be shown only to decline from this conclusion by commission of the fallacy *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*. The experience of beauty is an *activity*, and hence in its own way good and pleasant; it has therefore been confused

[1] Pp. 74, 75, *supra*.

[2] *Winter's Tale*, IV. iii. 89.

with morality and with pleasure. Its activity is *contemplation of passion*; and hence it has been identified with knowledge and with feeling simply. It contemplates passion by means of expressing it in *sensible* form, and has therefore been mistaken for the imitation of natural objects.

It will not unnaturally be asked what expression means. And though we might justifiably reply that if, as we hold, it is a primary spiritual activity, it can no more be explained than can thinking itself, yet here too some elucidation can at least negatively be attempted. Certainly, as Croce has pointed out,[1] expression is not to be identified with symptom, for a quickened pulse does not express fear. Nor is it a sign connected with the thing signified by mere convention or association of ideas. A tonsure need not be, even to one who sees it, the expression of religious feeling, nor well-worn boots of our enjoyment in the Alps. These signs can, as we say, symbolize or remind us of certain things, but they do not usually express them. That for an exceptional mind, in a particular context of intense feeling, they never could do so or help to do so I do not say. A heightened colour, on the other hand, would usually be said to express excitement, a kneeling posture reverence, but much more certainly would Sappho's *Anactoria* be called expressive of an individual passion or a spring morning of cheerfulness. But even this is only a rough generalization. We may read the poem or watch the dawn coldly; and in that case, like other symbols, they may indeed remind us of certain feelings – call up, in the language of the psychologists, ideas of them – but they do not actually embody or express them.[2] This is the reason why it is not the written or spoken

[1] *Estetica*, p. 110.

[2] Cf. Ruskin's diary (Cook's *Life*, i, p. 246): 'Put my mind into the scene instead of suffering the body only to make report of it. . . . Only while under the possession-taking grasp of the imagination could one draw or invent or give glory to any part of such a landscape. . . . The whole scene without it was but sticks and stones and steep, dusty road.' Cf. Coleridge, *Biog. Lit.*, i, p. 202 (edited by Shawcross): the Imagination 'is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead. Fancy on the other hand has no other counters to play with but fixities and definites.'

Cf. Shawcross, 'Association and Aesthetic Perception', in *Mind*, xix (N.S.), 73: 'The associative process is but the necessary condition, the machinery subservient to the activity of these higher powers, whose effect it is of itself no more competent to call

poem nor the perceived atmospheric conditions which must strictly be called beautiful, but only a particular way in which at a given moment any individual expresses himself in them. And the best description of such an experience seems to be that in it we embody or express in sensible form our feelings; bring before our minds for contemplation what we had already somehow been or done. It is the general character of all beautiful things that they come to us at once as familar and as revelations; that they are, as we say, inevitable or convincing,[1] like the answer to a problem; that they are in loose language:

*What oft was* felt *but ne'er so well expressed.*

They are full of feeling and yet not mere feelings, sensible and yet not mere objects, both sensuous and passionate. If it be said that such a point is of very little value; that we have only substituted for the word beauty a number of others which almost succeed in conveying the same idea, this has been conceded from the beginning. It would be foolish to seek any substitute for the experience of beauty, and scarcely less so to argue that it is really identical with any other experience or combination of experiences. But we cannot permanently stifle the desire to understand goodness and beauty and their relations with each other or with knowledge as well as to practise or enjoy them; and since this desire does often lead to explanations and substitutions false in themselves and apt to affect practice harmfully, careful thinking on the subject is better than the casual confusions which no one altogether escapes; and though, if the conclusion of the whole matter should ever be attained, it may seem no great thing, it will at least be more wholesome than the inevitable errors which preceded it. In the meantime, though I do not pretend to have reached a solution satisfactory even to myself, I certainly feel the better for the investigation and an undiminished appetite for its pursuit.

into being than the lyre could of itself evoke the music which is conjured from it by the hand of genius'; and Bosanquet, 'Aesthetic Emotion', loc. cit.; and Croce, *Problemi*, p. 21.

[1] Cf. Coleridge, *Anima Poetae*, p. 136 (edited by E. H. Coleridge; Heinemann): 'In looking at objects of Nature . . . I seem to be rather seeking . . . a symbolical language for something within me . . . than observing anything new.'

# APPENDICES

# Appendix A

## THE LUDICROUS[1]

### I

When any theorist about humour is mentioned, whether Bergson or Lipps or Hegel, some superior persons remark that he is an instance of the lack of humour. A protest must therefore be entered against the referee being expected to get tries. If the reader will not expect that I should intend to amuse him, I will content myself with trying not to amuse him unintentionally.

1. The antithesis of comedy to tragedy and, in general, the important part played by various forms of comedy in art, suggest that the ludicrous is either a species of beauty, if that term be used widely, or, if it be taken more narrowly, that they are two species of some wider but anonymous genus. But it is remarkable, on the threshold, that we have a word *amusement* for our attitude to what is funny, but no precisely parallel name for our attitude to what is sublime, pretty, or beautiful, such terms as *admiration*, *appreciation*, *love* being all of wider significance. The subjective side of the relation is certainly more obvious in the ludicrous; for it is often seriously maintained that things are beautiful whether anybody is aware of it or not, whereas, though we call things funny or absurd, I have never heard it suggested that they have these qualities in themselves as they have length or roundness. Certainly we often speak of the humour, the irony, the fun of a situation or event, but the words are no less proper used subjectively, as when we say that a man is full of fun or humour; and, on the other hand, though we naturally speak of things as having beauty, it is rather artificial to say that they

[1] Some parts of this Appendix are reproduced from my article in the *Hibbert Journal* for April 1923 with the Editor's permission.

have ludicrousness or funniness. In fact, except *comedy*, which is the name of a dramatic form, there hardly seems to be a colloquial noun denoting the ludicrous. The nearest parallel to *beauty* is perhaps *absurdity*.

Obviously there might be two main lines on which we could investigate our subject: either by analyzing our feelings or by analyzing what gives rise to them. But, on the latter path, the considerations just suggested will warn us that it is not things as they physically are whose nature will explain amusement, but only things in some relation to our consciousness, to some purpose or judgement of ours. There is nothing which cannot be funny – heaven and hell, love and death, philosophers and clowns – and nothing – clowns or philosophers, love or death, hell or heaven – that need be. We might indeed still distinguish a psychological account of our state of mind when things amuse us from a more critical account of the relation that must have been set up between them and us for that state of mind to arise; yet the two methods, though distinguishable, would not in practice be very distinct. For though definitions of the ludicrous are often open to the formal criticism that the genus and differentia offered are not *in pari materia*, one being subjective and the other objective, yet, if the so-called 'quality' of funny things – their futility, inconsistence, or incongruousness – be recognized as only a relation of them to our purposes, the confused definition becomes more excusable if not more enlightening.

Things, then, are only ludicrous when judged by some human standard.[1]

2. Amusement must be distinguished from laughter, which like tears is a physical affection that can have purely physical causes. We may laugh when we are tickled, or cry in a cold wind and at certain kinds of pain. But tears and laughter may also be the bodily symptoms of mental states, called sorrow and amusement, which can

[1] 'Das Gefühl der Komik entsteht, indem ein—gleichgültig ob an sich oder nur für uns—Bedeutungsvolles oder Eindrucksvolles für uns oder in uns seiner Bedeutung oder Eindrucksfähigkeit verlustig geht' (Lipps, *Komik u. Humor*, p. 59). [The experience of the ludicrous occurs when something which is or seems to us significant or impressive loses those qualities.]

exist without any outward manifestation. I propose to look for a common quality in those states of mind that could naturally be signified by smiles or laughter, as sorrow could appropriately vent itself in silent tears or passionate weeping.

There is nearly always a predominant feeling of pleasure in laughter; but, since pleasure is a social asset, a great deal of smiling and laughing is either consciously feigned in the interest of good-fellowship or involuntarily assumed in order to conceal embarrassment or distress. To smile or laugh in solitude is a rather uncommon blessing, but we smile, sometimes more than we rejoice, on meeting our acquaintances, and exaggerate malicious laughter to convince ourselves and others that our triumph is complete. Dawn is said to smile, presumably without amusement or affectation, as little children do, from simple pleasure and good temper: the maxim to grin and bear it must be understood as a counsel to lessen our enemy's triumph by affecting a detachment we do not feel. At any rate, whatever life's real proportions of gloom and gaiety, laughter is much commoner in public than tears, which indeed, except in definite hypocrisy, are checked even by companionship and inhibited by society.[1] This tendency to feign the symptoms which sometimes almost succeeds in inducing the condition of amusement, though it adds somewhat to the obscurity of our investigation, is itself a significant fact. In all ludicrous things, then, we find some pleasure, and pleasure in a stricter sense than that in which we can be said to take pleasure in a tragedy.

3. Plato suggests that the ludicrous is a mixture of the pain of malice[2] with the pleasure of superiority when we detect an unconscious ignorance in others, so long as it is not dangerous. This formula is sagacious and was accepted with little improvement by Hobbes. A certain mixture of attraction and repulsion, a certain sense of triumphing over something, are marks generally ascribed to the comic. The absence of immediate or extreme fear is a mere condition of any aesthetic experience whatever and is insisted on by Kant in

[1] This was much less so in the eighteenth century. C. J. Fox could cry over a novel without shame.

[2] *φθόνος*. Not quite envy, for we do not call it envy to rejoice in the misfortunes of others. *Philebus*, pp. 49 et seq.

his treatment of sublimity;[1] more interesting is the suggestion that only men are funny, and they only by falling short of some ideal.

Aristotle enlarges the generic field and narrows the specific differentiation by defining the ludicrous as any blemish or fault which is neither painful nor destructive. I think he means painful or destructive to neither the possessor nor the spectator.[2] This includes more kinds of fun but illuminates the finer comedy less: – that masterpiece of humour, for instance, with which, at the end of the *Symposium*, Plato illustrates his own definition by Socrates proving to the drunken Aristophanes that tragedy and comedy belong to the same poet. But Aristotle advances by dropping the suggestion of malice. Our laughter at children and kittens is doubtless neither quite without envy nor without some sense of superiority, but has none of Plato's bitterness.

The ludicrous then, though predominantly pleasant, contains an element of something opposed to ourselves as either hostile or inferior, and therefore in some degree disparaged; or rather, perhaps, until we began to laugh at it, it did contain the alien element, whose memory survives in our pleasant laughter.

4. Since we may laugh both at a comedy and at comic events in life, and weep both at a tragedy and at real pains or losses, the two kinds of art have been often treated as obviously on the same level. Moreover they are admittedly in some sense opposites. So, as the real events at which we weep are in the nature of immediate or unaesthetic pain, loss, and defeat, it has been assumed that the real experiences at which we laugh must be in the nature of immediate pleasure and success: 'A sudden glory, arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly.'[3] Yet nobody need

[1] *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, § 28. Anmerkung.

[2] *Poetics*, 1449*a*, 32. 'Comedy represents men as below the average (*φαυλοτέρων*); not in every respect, for the ridiculous is but a species of the ugly (*τοῦ αἰσχροῦ*). Τὸ γὰρ γελοῖόν ἐστιν ἁμάρτημά τι καὶ αἶσχος ἀνώδυνον καὶ οὐ φθαρτικόν. [The ludicrous is any blunder or deformity which is neither painful nor injurious.] E.g., a comic mask. Plato had used the phrase *ἀβλαβὴς τοῖς ἄλλοις*. [Harmless to others.]

[3] Hobbes, *Human Nature*, ix. Cf. *Leviathan* I, vi. Contrast Lipps, *Komik und Humor*, p. 14: 'If I see a man vainly trying to lift a weight I may not laugh though I think I could easily lift it. If, in that belief, I try and fail, I probably do.'

find it funny to get food when he is hungry or even when others are very hungry. Not all pleasure or success, even if unexpected, need amuse us.

Others, with Locke, have supposed that heterogeneity or (using a word which already has a comic connotation) incongruity is naturally comic. Yet nobody need laugh at the combination of a hot sun with a cold wind, even if the sun comes out suddenly. Not every heterogeneity, even if unexpected, need amuse us. Incompatibility can be tragic.[1]

Croce, whose aesthetic in its main outlines I accept, also assumes this equal level of comedy and tragedy; but, in accordance with his general theory, it is an equality of indifference. Granting that comedy, like tragedy or any other beautiful thing or work of art, is the expression of emotion or volition, he concludes that, like all other so-called 'kinds' of art (melodrama, genre, heroic) or of beauty (sublimity, prettiness, romance), it is indefinable, being merely a pseudo-concept or grouping together, for practical convenience, of individuals more or less alike but without any real identity. For him the only strictly aesthetic quality of aesthetic experiences is the formal one that they are all recognized as expressive; what differentiates them from one another is the subject-matter, not in itself beautiful or aesthetic at all, which they express. This subject-matter consists in volitional or emotional states not properly known before they are expressed, but only obscurely felt. Expressions of such states are all purely individual and can only be arbitrarily grouped together under terms like comedy or sublimity, which are as variable and indefinable as moral terms like magnanimity, gentlemanliness, pedantry.

Yet this assumption that comedy and tragedy are on the same level seems to neglect a fundamental difference of which we are always dimly aware. I am prepared to accept Croce's doctrine of the aesthetic irrelevance of all the other 'kinds', but find myself incurably convinced that the comic differs essentially from other forms of beauty.

When Polonius tells an artist that his heroic poem is really a

[1] Cf. Lipps, op. cit., p. 9.

pathetic drama, or his romance a realistic study, the question may be treated as a more or less interesting one about words; but to call his tragedy or his landscape or his sonata funny would be bare insult. And this is by no means because the term is in itself dyslogistic like 'pretty', which has come to damn any work of art by its faint praise; for 'funny' is, after all, the highest tribute we can pay to Falstaff or the Ecclesiazusae. The lady who called the Falls of the Clyde pretty may have had a poor vocabulary, but even Coleridge knew that she intended pure appreciation. She would probably have been pleased to be told becomingly that she was herself prettier; whereas, if she had called them funny, to be told that she was funnier herself would have been a punishment well deserved. Yet to have called Coleridge's story funny would have pleased him.

Beauty moreover, by a quite natural and explicable error, has commonly been connected with moral goodness, both as a symptom of it in the artist and as productive of it in the beholder. But no such relation is ever suggested between morality and the ludicrous. Wit belongs to a spirit that denies.

That comic experience is, all the same, a kind of aesthetic experience seems to need no argument. It may be enough to notice that what amuses us need not necessarily be either true or false, right or wrong, useful or hurtful: all these categorie are irrelevant.

What I would suggest, then, is that amusement differs from other aesthetic experiences, namely, those of pure beauty, formally; so that the difference must be definable in a way in which the difference between our appreciation of a tragedy, a love lyric and an epic may not. That, of course, is not to say that comedy and tragedy cannot be inextricably intertwined. Not only is death or a given death capable of comic or tragic treatment but it may definitely be treated in both ways at once. The death of Falstaff is not fully appreciated unless it suggest both tears and laughter, and each heighten the other. The very fact that to remark on this combination seems not without point really proves, I think, the essential difference of the two. For in King Lear it would be pedantry to insist that we must appreciate distinctly both the tragedy *and* the pathos of his death,

or the beauty *and* sublimity of Cordelia, or that one of these elements by its contrast heightens the other. They pass into one another insensibly as comedy does not pass into tragedy or into any other form of beauty however they may be fused.

Artistic comedy and artistic tragedy may be accepted as analogous or antithetical to each other. But whereas a tragedy is the artistic expression or contemplation of something, loosely called an emotion, which occurs in our practical life independently of reflection, something by itself in no way aesthetic, something that we recognize also in the distress of a hunted animal or of a bird whose young are killed, a comedy on the other hand is only the elaboration of an experience already comic, already, that is to say, reflective or aesthetic, which animals probably do not share. Some animals seem to show boredom, as we do, by yawning; but though their eyes water, and though they obviously experience distress, these do not seem connected as they are in us. The crocodile is perhaps a martyr to congestion of the lachrymatory duct. Elephants are reported to play practical jokes, and the dog at least seems to have an uncomfortable sense of being ridiculed, but animals certainly do not laugh and, in general, almost certainly, like Queen Victoria, are not amused.

We are on safer ground in examining our own consciousness. There it is evident that to appreciate a tragedy or to take a tragic view of our own or other lives first presupposes an immediate, unaesthetic experience called suffering. But what analogous immediate experience is presupposed by our ability to see ourselves or others in a comic light? At a tragedy we may weep if we imaginatively identify ourselves with persons weeping or suffering what would make us weep for ourselves; in comedy we laugh indeed with the witty, but what we laugh at is precisely those whose sense of absurdity is deficient.

I conclude that before we begin to appreciate the comic aspect of real life we must have *already* exercised the aesthetic activity upon it, have in some sense reflected upon our brute experience. Whereas natural beauty is beautiful by expressing desires or repulsions, not in themselves aesthetic, common to all conscious bodily life, it is not easy to discover the natural or, as we might say, physi-

cal experience, itself not humorous, which finds expression in the ludicrous. It may be objected that it is also often hard to say exactly *what* feeling is expressed by scenery or by formal beauty or even, to a less degree, by poetry. Certainly we do not expect to be able to express precisely the feelings expressed even by a poem except in that poem, but we can indicate and recognize their type. And so we can indicate, as nature-poetry does, the type of feelings expressed for us by a given storm-cloud or sunrise or autumn evening or by a colour pattern. At all events, so far as we find these things beautiful, it is because they come to us, as we say, charged with feeling, of which they are no arbitrary symbol but the natural embodiment. It is at least intelligible how certain effects of colour, movement, and sound, and still more how certain perceived objects like sea, cloud, plants, beasts, and men, should by their primary physiological stimulus, their perceived character, or acquired meanings and associations, be expressive of feelings which we can roughly name. But I cannot even conjecture what kind of natural or immediate feeling might be expressed by the comic. And this fact, I think, exactly corresponds to our first impression that, though aesthetic, it is specifically different from beauty.

5. The numerous attempts to explain the ludicrous agree in regarding it in a relation both of antagonism and of connexion with beauty, and also as in some connexion with ugliness or defect. This last relation is generally described as some sort of triumph over or reconciliation with the defective object. But all the theories cease to satisfy at the point beyond this where they diverge; that is to say, as soon as they attempt to define more precisely what kind of defect or incongruity and what kind of triumph they intend. One school thinks it is an intellectual defect in persons; another some physical discrepancy of objects; a third some moral defect. I suggest that it is simply an aesthetic defect.[1] An aesthetic defect is in Croce's view a failure in expressiveness. The only way in which the consciousness of aesthetic failure, the disgust at ugliness, can be aesthetically

[1] Lipps sometimes gets very near this by his psychological method. *Komik und Humor*, p. 39, quoted *supra*, p. 205.

redeemed or vanquished is by expressing it. If then we are right in taking the ludicrous to be aesthetic it must be so by the expression of our displeasure at the ugly. Humour is the aesthetic counterpart of remorse: an activity conditioned by a previous failure in the same sphere. We find aesthetic satisfaction in the ludicrous because it expresses a feeling; but that feeling is one which is itself already aesthetic, or rather presupposes an attempt to exercise the aesthetic activity without success. What we vainly attempt to make or find expressive is ugly; the expression of our sense of its inadequacy is comic.

To the barrenness of most accounts of humour I have found three grateful exceptions; to all of which, though none is quite satisfactory, I owe much. Mr A. C. Bradley's *Rejection of Falstaff* in *Oxford Lectures in Poetry* is a perfect illustration, by a concrete instance, of the truth; but he refrains from theorizing. The two theories are those of Hegel and Bergson. I can best support my own view by showing briefly where it leaves these guides.

It is noticeable that while Hegel deals with natural beauty, though very inadequately in comparison with his treatment of art, he offers no account of the naturally amusing. Indeed in his discussion of comedy he several times alludes to the 'merely laughable' as if it were something obviously beneath his concern.

He significantly regards the rise of comedy to prominence as in every case a sign of the breakdown of some method or type of artistic expression. Describing the growth of satire he says that classical art,[1] the fully adequate expression of the spiritual in bodily form, had begun to fail. The embodiment no longer satisfied, for when spirit came to be thought of abstractly everything worldly seemed only alien and hostile to it. But body or the sensible world and spirit, taken thus in abstraction, are each of them prosaic and so is the relation between them. (That is, I suppose, they are ugly.) So spirit, being denied its realization (or expression) in any sensible form, turns to grotesque, mocking and reviling a world which seems to contradict it. Thus arises satire, which is not a kind of poetry but a breaking up of the classical ideal of beauty. This breakdown of

[1] *Aesthetik*, vol. ii, p. 113 (II. ii, III. 3).

classical beauty is expressed at different times by Aristophanes and Lucian.

Similarly, at a later stage[1] the breakdown of the ideal of romantic art is supposed to give rise to the comedy of Ariosto, Cervantes, Shakespeare. The characteristic of romantic poetry had been that the aims of the hero were personal to himself – his own love or honour – and not essentially moral or social; so that our interest is in the subjective force of character rather than the cause at stake. What thwarts and ruins such a hero is apt to be accidental rather than any opposing moral end or social institution.

But if such individualistic detachment and self-sufficiency are pushed far enough, Hegel thinks that what results is impossible, self-contradictory, and comic. Cervantes and Ariosto thus parodied the romantic ideal itself and Shakespeare in his humorous characters parodies the typically romantic individual – the man to whom his private ends and scruples and dignity are all-sufficing.[2] Don Quixote's madness just consists in a lack of self-criticism; he is a knight-errant in an ordered world which errantry can only disturb.

Humour in general is described a few pages later[3] as the antithesis of art; for while the latter expresses something which is essentially just and true, the comic artist uses his own subjective point of view to criticize and destroy all that claims such essential validity in the world. Here then we are interested not in the object but in the artist. The fun just consists in emphasizing the inadequacy of form to matter, in the artificiality of the symbolism: but it is shallow fun unless there had been something really embodied in the form that is thus destroyed.

Much later in the book[4] Hegel returns to the subject under the topic of the modern drama. Whereas in tragedy the individual is shipwrecked through his one-sided rebellion against some permanent interest of humanity, in comedy we are amused by the triumph of his subjective aims over all that is essentially valid – truth, order,

[1] ii. 213 (II. iii, III. 2*b*). Croce has, I think, shown that Hegel's interpretation of Ariosto is one-sided. *Ariosto, Shakespeare e Corneille.*

[2] Hegel evidently read through the spectacles of his theory and that should have led him to say that Shakespeare in his comedies parodied his own tragedies.

[3] ii. 226 (3*b*).

[4] iii. 533 (III. iii, III. 3*bβ*).

and morality. Thus comedy shows us a world whose own futility and arbitrariness destroy it. Yet, by a curious distinction, Hegel remarks that mere frivolity, scepticism, and vice are not comic but 'merely ludicrous; for men laugh at anything *however serious* which betrays some inadequate or inexpressive (*unbedeutende*) aspect.' If Hegel is serious in this absurd solemnity he deserves all the fun that has ever been poked at his dialectic: we should like to put him in a buck-basket with Falstaff – but the true Falstaff – and Mephistopheles. Such laughter, he says, is the expression of pleasure at our own cleverness in detecting the contrast.

But, in a better vein, he goes on to say that the truly comic is the triumph over one's own contradiction and over the ruin of one's own purposes. He classifies the inconsistencies which make comedy as the devotion to an inadequate end (like that of the miser), the devotion to a great end of inadequate characters (like those of the Ecclesiazusae), the inconsistency of the end with its means[1] or of the character with its situation.[2] But, in accordance with his general view, he concludes that comedy, being a kind of art, cannot by these oppositions finally intend the humiliation either of what is permanently good and true in the world or of the individual spirit as such. Aristophanes does not laugh at true philosophy, poetry, or statesmanship (surely we should say 'at what seems to him true') but only at the absurdity of their false forms, and in the rout of this false idealism by facts the true personal spirit remains gay and undismayed. Finally at the conclusion of the whole work[3] we read that the true subject of comedy is the personality which remains careless in spite of the self-contradiction that destroys its purposes. But, for this carelessness to be possible, the purposes must be trivial or not deeply desired. The truly comic characters are those whose ends are personal and who know it,[4] so that they do not cry over spilt milk. The freedom of the spirit is shown by their not taking such private interests seriously; they are comic to themselves as well as to us.

[1] 'Starry-eyed idealism.'

[2] Cf. Thornton Wilder's *Heaven is my Destination.*

[3] iii. 558, 580 (III. iii, III. iii, C. 3cβ (γγ).

[4] Cf. the two senses of *humorous*, e.g., *Every Man in his Humour.*

Hegel thinks that as opposed to Aristophanes modern comedy is 'prosaic' (*i.e.* inartistic) because its characters, like Don Quixote and Tartuffe, are not amusing to themselves, Shakespeare's being the chief exception. The result is that they are hateful (!) rather than comic, and the amusement of detailed traits of character is substituted. Comedy then[1] is the culmination of art, starting where tragedy breaks off, but is also the dissolution of art in general. For art (and this to Hegel means beauty) is an identity, created by spirit, between what is eternal, divine, or true and a form in which this is made sensible to our perception and imagination. But comedy presents this unity only in its dissolution.

This theory is profoundly suggestive. Its elaboration would be justified if only because it has surely stimulated Mr A. C. Bradley's inimitable essay on Falstaff. But it is handicapped by all the fundamental errors, as I think them, of Hegel's main aesthetic position. For Hegel has the philosophic virtue of system; you always know where you are on the map though you may have lost your compass and consequently your way. These pervasive errors, or those of them that are here relevant, are briefly two: the hazardous neglect or degradation of natural beauty, and incidentally of the naturally comic, and – far more serious – the belief that what beauty expresses or embodies is spirit as such in its universality, the ultimate reality, truth and goodness, which is also the content of religion and philosophy.[2] If we substitute for the first of these errors the view that in the appreciation of any beautiful thing the aesthetic activity, the essential work of artistic creation, has been accomplished, and for the second the view that what is expressed in every beautiful thing is itself something individual and unique, a movement indeed of the human spirit but not necessarily anything that can be called good or true, we might restate Hegel's theory of comedy as follows: We call those things beautiful, whether they are made by nature, by others, or ourselves, which are expressive to us of spiritual states that we recognize as actually or potentially our own. Things which fail to be thus expressive, in which the harmony of form and content is incomplete, are, at least if they claim or are

[1] P. 579. [2] Cf. *supra*, Chaps. II (ii) and VII.

expected to be expressive, ugly; but by some kind of emphasis on this ugliness, which Hegel does not very clearly elucidate, the artist can make this inexpressiveness, this disharmony of form and content, amusing. We may laugh at mere ugliness, the incongruity of people's looks or conduct, pluming ourselves, with a sudden glory, upon our superior cleverness; but the truest comedy, Hegel would say, is in the man who recognizes, like Falstaff or Hippocleides, the inexpressiveness and incoherence of his own looks or conduct, but does not care.

Now though we must differ from Hegel as to what is expressed by beauty, we might agree that failure in this expressiveness is just what can, under certain conditions, be rescued from mere ugliness and become comic. What those conditions are is at present obscure, but we may note his suggestion that they consist in some way of rising superior to the failure or of not minding it. The result of this would be to conclude that the ludicrous is always something built up out of the ruin of potential beauty. Only that which has purported to be expressive and has failed would amuse us. But would it always do so or, if not, why?

I can hardly imagine two books on similar topics, and both good, which would differ more than Hegel's *Aesthetik* and Bergson's *Le Rire*. The German is profound, discursive, obscure; illuminating both by his principle and by the richness of its application, so that even if we question the first we are challenged and stimulated by the second. The Frenchman is plausible, relevant, lucid: abounding in the aptest empirical illustrations of a single aspect of his subject. I profess a great admiration of M. Bergson's work, and the greatest when, as in *Le Rire*, I believe that I understand it adequately. The book is certainly not free from the disease endemic in philosophical definitions, and not generally fatal to them (*ἁμάρτημα οὐ φθαρτικὸν*) of not being convertible with the thing to be defined; it does not seem to cover all the amusing facts, and it seems to cover some which are not amusing. And it also has the weakness, supposed to be the very antithesis of philosophical theory, but which the author would perhaps claim as a merit, that it is not systematic. Though its connexion with the general Bergsonian outlook is obvious, we get our defini-

tion of the species without any clear elucidation of the genus. If we had a companion essay, *Les Larmes*, we should at once feel the necessity of a complete aesthetic, and the question would necessarily suggest itself why sorrow and other passions may be immediate and practical and need expression in art, while amusement is always aesthetic, the result of critical reflection, and seems already to be the expression of we know not what. Again we are told that the comic is that specific ugliness which looks like stiffness or habit, but not what is ugly in general.

In spite of these defects *Le Rire* seems to me the most suggestive theory of humour that I know, always, as it were, hesitating on the brink of some convincing revelation which it never quite achieves.

It will not be necessary to give any detailed analysis of a work so widely read and so eminently readable. In brief the theory is that nothing is ludicrous but man, and he is only ludicrous when he looks like a thing. A thing which looked like a man would naturally suggest the same effect. A face, a phrase, a movement are funny when we notice the inadequacy of the material embodiments to express the spirit which should inform them. '*Le mécanisme plaqué sur la vie*'[1] is the formula. Whenever society or bodily habit or conduct or speech betrays its mechanical element by rigidity, momentum, repetition, reversibility or what may be called standardization and interchangeability of parts, we laugh. The typically funny thing then would be habit, convention, type; all that exhibits or suggests our failure to adapt ourselves spontaneously to environment. And the subtlest form of comedy would be this in its least vulgar but perhaps most dangerous form, the mechanism of an ideal like Don Quixote's, when a man falls into the mud not because he is short-sighted but because he is gazing at the stars. Self-confidence is the ideal butt.

There are two corollaries to the theory, presented as closely connected, but of which I believe one to be quite irrelevant and the other, though inaccurately stated, of great importance. These are the

[1] Cf. Lotze, 'The comic is a joke played by the mechanism of nature on the freedom of the spirit.'

social utility of laughter and its incompatibility with sympathy. We may try to dispose of the first at once. The theory is that faults which absolutely incapacitate a man for social life are eliminated by natural selection; other serious anti-social vices are dealt with by legal punishments; but there remains a slight degree of inadaptability whose symptom is the rigidity above described; and against this first hint of danger society defends itself by laughter. Now laughter, like yawning, which is the sign of boredom, or blushing, which is the sign of embarrassment, can obviously have a social use. So in very crude societies can spitting, hooting, or other signs of anger. But the question precisely which interests us is: of what is laughter the sign? The nature of ridicule – that in which it differs from boredom – is not explained by remarking that we do not like to be its object. A more interesting differentiation, of which Bergson never really offers any explanation, is that we do enjoy its exercise, whereas yawning, blushing, and very often anger, are social castigations which may hurt 'us' more than they do 'you'.[1]

Moreover it is just here that Hegel seems to have the advantage. The delighted individual spirit revels in mockery of exactly those regularities and conformities which are the vital interest of society.

On what else does Falstaff fatten than on the absurdity, for a rational creature, of being punctual in the payment of his debts, the keeping of his appointments, and the performance of the duties of a husband or a citizen? What the devil has he to do with the time of the day or with old father antic the law? The laws of England are at his commandment. As a law-giver and a law-abider man must act in the gross and by precedent. A good civil servant of lower grade is indeed *mécanisme plaqué sur la vie*, an animated card-index. Laughter is an out-law, an anarchist.

The other appendix, that amusement is killed by sympathy, is more plausible, and contains some significant truth, but as it is stated, without qualification and of all kinds of laughter, it will hardly

[1] A tyrant might say 'Rideant dum metuunt', but would have to be almost supersensible to mean it, for if the laughter were genuine, not being kindly, it would be a triumph. Cf. the Oxford don X who on being introduced to Hitler and greeted with 'Heil Hitler' replied, 'Heil X'.

stand. 'I love a fool,' says Elia, and his essays confirm it, 'as if I were kith and kin to him.' We certainly can make fun of ourselves, and of others without offence; we laugh at children. It might be said that it is rather veneration which is opposed to sympathy, and that a ludicrous trait in a great man makes him more lovable by bringing him on to our human level. Plato thought that we could not laugh at what we feared, and perhaps it needs the genius of a Falstaff; whereas we have a little pity for the ludicrous and that is akin to love.

It is true that if a man is in a very painful situation it is only by quieting our 'sympathy' that we can find it comic. The most shocking joke I ever heard was the laughter of some soldiers during the war – not Englishmen – over a German who had burnt away half his face with his own *Flammenwerfer*. But sympathy is an ambiguous term. In order to find a man's discomfiture funny it may be necessary to realize the kind of discomfiture he is feeling. Only shyness itself can fully appreciate the embarrassment of a modest man; this might make us sorry for him, if we liked him, or maliciously pleased if we owed him a grudge, and in either case we might or might not be amused.

Or we can laugh at some trait or situation of which the man is quite unconscious; and, if it be said that what amuses us is the shame or discomfort he would have if he discovered it, we can answer that often it is just because he is incapable of feeling such shame that he is funny. On the other hand, we often enough laugh without malice at some trait of which, and of whose absurdity, the owner is as well aware as we.

No doubt the continual suggestion of an element of hostility or malice from Plato to Bergson is significant. But the pre-condition of amusement is not, as they thought, absence of feeling in general but absence of expressed feelings, that is of beauty; not of sympathy but of 'empathy' or aesthetic sympathy.

## II

1. The older theories held that not only aesthetic failure – the ugly – but also logical, moral, or economic failure – the inconsequent, the vicious, or the imprudent – in a word any form of error was the proper food for laughter. This is in a sense true. Logical, moral, and economic activities can all be regarded on that aesthetic side which, as Croce insists, they all possess. A vice, a fallacy, a blunder are, from the moral, logical, economic points of view, serious enough; they are in fact wicked, false, dangerous; and the man who cannot see this is fatuous. Regarded as incoherencies of expression, bits of mechanism adhering to life, faults of style, so to speak, they are ugly or absurd. The man who cannot see this has no sense of humour.

What then is the typically amusing thing? I should say a work of art that misses its mark and fails of its intended expression. The most immediately and undeniably funny thing in the world is what seems to us a bit of high-faluting tragedy or unintended bathos. Of the same kind is any breakdown of dignity or intensity, whenever a man has wished to present himself or his position as venerable or tragic or passionate, and is betrayed into words or action inconsistent with the part he would play.[1] A plain man may squander unnoticed a thousand little blunders, any one of which would have immortalized a mayor in his robes. The mere expectation that we should not laugh in church is provocative. If the widow who said that she and her poor dear husband 'were all in all to one another – more or less,' had been content to say 'much', nobody would have laughed.

Next comes the failure of life, especially in its bodily aspects, to express congruously either the human spirit, which we naturally assume human bodies should express, or some definite feeling which

[1] Bain, *Mental and Moral Science*, III. xiii. Pope instances *The Art of Sinking in Poetry* by:

*And thou Dalhousie, thou great god of war*
*Lieutenant Colonel to the Earl of Mar.*

Is this made funnier by a pun on Mar and Mars? The pun is a difficulty discussed at end of Appendix A.

we expect them to express in a given context. Here are to be grouped the absurdities of feature and bodily form and movement on which Bergson has concentrated his attention. They are all cases of expression *manqué*. Any feature or adornment merely new, either absolutely or in relation to a known person, such as the growth of a beard, may seem comic, because, from its lack of association with him or with humanity in general, it seems inexpressive.[1] Yet *Le Rire* does not afford an account of the peculiar opportunities for humour offered by the improper and by the kindred sphere of the profane. For the first the general formula of 'emphasis on the physical in a spiritual context' might be employed, though it would hardly explain the peculiar poignancy. The second does not always come under the definition; for though '*Le bon Dieu me pardonnera; c'est son métier*' suggests a certain mechanism, Mephistopheles' '*Von Zeit zu Zeit seh' ich den Alten gern*' is funny out of proportion to its substitution of habit for spontaneity, which would be the same were the old gentleman one's uncle and not God.

It is for the mastering emotions of love and religion, so far as they are not content to confess themselves mere lust and superstition, that men most necessarily seek expression. And where they are most impelled to create beauty they most dread the ugliness which is failure and which can only be redeemed as comic. Otherwise it is hard to see why a passionate attraction to one's fellow mortals need have been more laughable than hate or hunger or any strong propensity; yet the relation of our physical economy to the love of the sexes and to the procreation of human souls has been a choice theme for humorists from Aristophanes to Sterne, only gaining an added piquancy from the added exaltations of Christian and chivalrous love. So universal is the appeal, so inherent does it seem in the subject, that if, on the strength of bodily and natural beauty, we speak of nature as the divine artist, providing us with natural symbols for self-expression, it is hard to see why we should not speak of it as the divine humorist providing us, in no malicious irony, with an inexhaustible well of timely laughter in the recurrent inadequacy of every sensuous expression to the furthest reaches of the soul. More

[1] Lipps, op. cit., p. 44.

subtly if less profoundly amusing are those extravagances of the spirit, doted on by Meredith, those illusions and self-deceptions, false delicacies and idealizations in which romantic passion has clothed itself in the modern world.

So also in religion it is the very sublimity intended which our ridicule of all its expressions honours. *Abortio pulcherrimi ridiculosissima.* This appealed early to the wit of Aristophanes and Lucian, but their fun was not so fine as Christians of smaller genius have extracted from a finer theology. God cannot be ridiculous, but that is why every human presentation of His sublimity must is.

2. Corresponding to the amusement which, without help, we may find in bad or dismoded pictures and poems is that work of the comic artist called parody. Nor is it surprising that the best parodies are often of the best poetry. We owe no more gratitude to the wit who shows us that Martin Tupper is funny than to the painter who reiterates portraits of obviously pretty models. Every artist, since he is also a man, gives us not pure expression, but *his* expression: expression whose transparent life, at least when his creation flags, is tinged with some tricks of his time and temper, some flecks of mechanical matter. But to parody Euripides required a comic genius; the sublimity of Aeschylus presented a worthy target to the ambitious marksman, and the unique perfection of Sophocles would have afforded a still smaller bull's-eye. We shall not take less pleasure in Shakespeare when his Aristophanes arises. Mr Beerbohm's gift compelled him to cast a modest glance towards that possibility, and in *Savonarola Brown* to offer a parody of unconscious parodies. Moreover mimicry as such is funny even when the personal or artistic traits ridiculed were not ugly. In their original context they were actually expressive or, by association with the whole personality or work of art, had come to seem so. Torn from that context and inserted into that of the mimic they become aesthetically incongruous.[1] As Mr Walkley says: 'The power of assuming another man's language is akin to the power of expressing your meaning in language which seems, on the face of it, to express another meaning' or none at all.

[1] Lipps, op. cit., p. 47.

3. It is verbal wit, more than any other kind of humour, which has always baffled the theorist in his effort to explain our amusement. Bergson has struggled hard to bring it under his formula, and we can accept most of his argument in our own slightly modified sense. Language aims always at expression, but there is always in it an inexpressive mechanical residue which, when our attention is directed to it, is ugly, unless we can make it amusing. The suave or monotonous or jerky tone of the speaker, the uniform appearance of printed page after printed page, begin to afflict us with a disgust beyond the mere boredom of *ennui* directly their meanings cease to interest us: parodied they are intensely amusing. The very look of a letter or the sound of a vowel, when divorced from meaning, may be ridiculous. Purposeless repetitions, assonances, jingles are either irritating or amusing. Just because it is the essence of language to be expressive, its failure is more ugly and more capable of being funny than that of action, which may have other justifications. It is funnier to stammer than to limp. Other things being equal, movements which approximate to talking, as snoring or audible mastication do, are the most ludicrous: that the organ of speech and of song, of philosophy and poetry, should have these gross uses! As with other kinds of humour, the obscurity, for the theorist, of verbal wit arises mainly from the difficulty of distinguishing on which side we are laughing. In a pun or a jingle do we laugh at the real or feigned clumsiness of the perpetrator or at the hustled solemnity of ourselves or some ideal listener?

Since verbal wit is a stumbling-block for any theory of the ludicrous, I might be comforted about its recalcitrance to the one I am maintaining, if the precise nature of the difficulty did not seem to point rather to a rival solution, in fact to support Croce's denial of the need or possibility of any solution. For it is just in this sphere that the ludicrous does seem to shade off imperceptibly into other aesthetic effects, from which it can only be distinguished by an arbitrary or, as Croce would say, pseudo-conceptual classification. *Wit*, now used, colloquially at least, only of the talent for amusing, was once the name also of the talent for neat and pithy aphorism: and we feel that its use in the two

senses is not, like that of the literary term *metaphysical*, a mere equivocation.

*For forms of government let fools contest;*
*Whate'er is best administered is best.*

*'Tis not in mortals to command success,*
*But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it.*

*The proper study of mankind is man.*

Such epigrams have little that is obviously ludicrous about them, yet are very closely allied to the wit, in our modern sense, of:

*We cannot blame indeed, but we may sleep,*

or of 'the pride that apes humility', where there is a distinct appeal to our sense of humour. There is the same kind of relationship between the two sorts of wit as between pure sleight-of-hand and the tricks which the conjuror or harlequin plays upon a clownish dupe. Both sorts of wit seem to have a claim to be aesthetic effects but neither to be strictly beautiful. The first set of quotations are not so much expressive of emotion as apt formulations of thought; which indeed is what Pope thought poetry was, whence, no doubt, the discussions that have arisen how far Pope and Dryden are properly poets.

I think my answer must be that even this 'wit' all tends towards paradox, the pricking of a bubble of expectation,[1] and is therefore amenable to my formula. Where this element of paradox is quite absent mere pithiness of expression does not seem to deserve the name of wit at all except in the sense of wisdom, as for instance, in '*Ars longa vita brevis est*'.

*Procrastination is the thief of time.*

or,

*Slow rises worth by poverty depressed.*

Paradox does for feeling what argued criticism does for the intellect. By an unexpected juxtaposition of words or ideas our emo-

[1] Cf. Wilde: 'An idealist knows the value of everything and the cost of nothing; a realist the cost of everything and the value of nothing.'

tional associations are reversed, as when Dr Johnson said that patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels. Either our involuntary recognition that the paradox contains truth reveals to us how far our customary gestures and phrases were from really expressing any spontaneous affection, and in that case we laugh at them: or really aesthetic experiences are dashed against the prose of life, and then we laugh at it. Either result is very near the nature we have ascribed to the ludicrous: the shock to our aesthetic susceptibilities, which is otherwise merely ugly, is reconciled to us by the neatness with which our shock is expressed: that is, it is rendered amusing. When we are told that fools contend for forms of government but nothing matters save its administration, we picture the romantic revolutionary who has to fold up his red flag, stop singing the 'Marseillaise', and start auditing the account. Similarly we smile at the ambitious conspirator, asked to value purity above success,[1] and the learned theologian or biologist who cannot understand his neighbours or his wife. But in all these quotations the element of comedy is mixed with others; and Croce, if I understand him, would be the first to assert that the existence of border-line cases is by itself no reason to deny the reality of a distinction.

The epithet *amusing* again is sometimes applied in critical slang to works of art not intended to be funny, especially painting and music, in a not altogether depreciatory sense. What is then indicated seems to be just not the aesthetic quality of expressiveness, but merely skilful technique, which is analogous to poetic *wit* in the extreme sense of mere ingenuity. The artist expresses no feeling, but enjoys himself in masterly play with the instruments of expression in general. The neatness with which he says nothing, or something merely prosaic, reminds us of the neatness which is a common method of making what is ugly (*i.e.*, inexpressive by incongruity) amusing (*i.e.*, expressive of our disgust at the ugly), and so is itself called *amusing*.

[1] Addison's lines just quoted can be laughably emended:—

*'Tis not in mortals to deserve success,*
*But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll command it.*

4. If the failure of expression is ugly we have now shown some grounds for thinking that under certain conditions it may be rendered amusing, and have even suggested what those conditions are. Indeed to a disciple of Croce who had once questioned his master's view that the ludicrous is indefinable, the conclusion would be obvious. Amusement is admittedly aesthetic; our dissatisfaction in what is ugly can only become an aesthetic success by being expressed. In this lies the puzzling kinship and hostility between absurdity and beauty. Humour is a form of expression, but differs from all other forms by postulating inexpressiveness, and so being twice removed from the crude emotional material of life; the attempt to express that material has failed, the failure is disheartening, but out of the appreciation of our defeat we draw a bitter-sweet triumph. To desire harmony, dignity, in a word aesthetic appropriateness, is the presupposition of the ludicrous. Can we describe further the Parthian archery by which ugliness is thus brought down in the very moment of its insult? We should hardly expect to succeed in this any more than in the attempt to explain the creative processes of willing or thinking or of aesthetic genius itself in its primary sphere. But if we cannot explain it we must try to track it down as closely as possible. Say that we are reading the verses of a wearisome imitator of Swinburne: the fellow seems to have nothing to say, but to have an immense way of saying it; we grow bored, nauseated, obscurely angry with we know not precisely what. We may, indeed, point to passages that specially annoy us, we may enumerate their faults in the language of 'scientific' criticism, but we know that these same damnatory labels might be mechanically applied also to the poems of real inspiration which are so feebly imitated. We can name our aesthetic aversions and indicate their objects, but we have not succeeded in expressing them. Then comes the humorist of talent; in this case – I quote from memory – I think it was Swinburne himself:

*The roses and raptures are in it,*
*And the grand Old-Testament ring,*
*But the high gods know in a minute*
*It isn't the genuine thing.*

In Croce's phrase *Lux facta est*. Henceforth our versiculist is a joy for ever.

Or, again, if we have been accustomed to think the face of an acquaintance merely ugly, an artist may redeem it for us by exhibiting it as expressive in a way we had not noticed, say of pathos, enthusiasm, tragic malevolence; or, a humorist by, as it were, underlining the lumpish features, emphasizing their resemblance to a snake or a rabbit or a block of wood, may make it comic. How either is done we cannot say; but if we have a touch of common talent we can often do both for ourselves: *καὶ πως ὁ διασυρμὸς ταπεινοτητός ἐστιν αὔξησις*.[1] The most common, if not the only, way in which artistic failure can be incurred is by falling short of individuality, achieving only the generality of science, type, argument, edification. Naturally enough, then, the characters of comedy are types; – Dicaeopolis, Mr Pickwick, Bobadil, *Les Precieuses Ridicules*. A comic figure is *un vrai type*.

5. There remains to be considered a very troublesome objection to this view. Can we not *express* (as well as state) our distaste for ugliness without being amusing? I think this criticism derives part of its force from the old ambiguity of the words ugly and beautiful, which has caused half the trouble in aesthetics. On the one hand anything that is neither sensuously nor morally attractive is popularly called ugly; yet the tragic poet, sculptor, or painter finds ugliness in this sense a necessary ingredient in his highest effects of beauty. Iago, Dante's Ugolino, with his teeth in the scalp of Ruggieri, Milton's Sin with the barking hell-hounds in her womb, the dwarfs and idiots of Velasquez, even some of Rembrandt's old men, though not funny, are not in this vulgar sense beautiful. Yet in the wider and more accurate sense of the word they are beautiful, finely expressive of very human feelings. The artist in all these creations has done what we supposed him to do for our 'ugly' acquaintance – made what was sensuously unattractive expressive, and so not aesthetically ugly at all.

But the objection is not thus wholly disposed of. Might not

[1] *De Sublimitate*, xxxviii. [Satire is a sort of exaggerated bathos.]

a serious work of art just express the artist's sense of failure to find expression and his sensibility to the ugliness of the world?

*Chiedea l'usate immagini*
*La stanca fantasia;*
*E la tristezza mia*
*Era dolore ancor.*

*Fra poco in me quell' ultimo*
*Doloro anco fu spento,*
*E di più far lamento*
*Valor non mi restò.*

*Invan brillare il vespero*
*Vidi per muto calle,*
*Invan sonò la valle*
*Del flebile usignol.*[1]

Perhaps the classical achievement in this distinction is Coleridge's *Dejection*, in which great beauty is made out of the despair with which the poet must gaze at the wonders of sunset and moonrise and 'see, not feel, how beautiful they are.' Stevenson somewhere attains an excellent literary description of that condition of windy barrenness when we feel ourselves teeming with poetical excitement, but can only gaze blankly at a paper which persists in remaining blank.

I feel this to be the real difficulty for the theory I am propounding, and there are two ways of dealing with it. The first would be to go back to Croce and admit that disgust for ugliness is, just like any other feeling, an indifferent matter for expression, capable of being expressed in an infinite number of unique ways, and that, no more here than elsewhere, can we infer from the nature of the matter a distinction in the form. 'Ludicrous' would be simply a pseudo-classification of certain aesthetic effects, philosophically as indefinable

[1] Leopardi, *Il Risorgimento*. [Vainly I called up the stale metaphors of tired imagination, my sadness was yet a torment. Soon even that torment was spent, I had no strength left to lament. Vainly I saw the sunset light the silent street. In vain the valley echoed the plaintive nightingale.]

as 'romantic'. I have already explained my insuperable difficulties in adopting this course.

The other way would be to distinguish: to try to show that in the instances cited the artist is not expressing his disgust at abortive expressions but only his longing to express. Neither Leopardi[1] nor Coleridge found the moon ugly, but only themselves dull. They did see, though they could not feel, its beauty. And the mere 'failure of genial spirits' is as great a bar to comic as to 'beautiful' expression. Coleridge did not complain that the evening sky was inadequate to express his feelings, but that he had no feelings to express except the regret for lost feelings, and that regret he triumphantly expresses. Stevenson did not find his paper ugly, he did not even expect it to be beautiful.

The ludicrous is the expression of the inadequacy of a suggested embodiment for feelings which strive to be expressed. Hence the element of triumph over something hostile, noted in it by Plato and Hobbes, and the element of incongruity and incoherence emphasized by others. Hence Hegel's contention that comedy is the breakdown of art, and Bergson's that it is mechanism where we expected life.

6. On this hypothesis what is a bad joke? A man may not really feel the inexpressiveness of things or, if he have the feeling, may not be able to control it to a humorous expression, and yet for one reason or another may of set purpose play the fool. He may want to maintain his reputation or his salary for buffoonery, he may wish to score off his enemies or, by a more amiable weakness, to keep up the spirits of his friends. Then he is apt to ransack the property-room of comedy, where he will find stored all the machinery that has ever in its day raised a laugh, ranging from puns and buttered slides, through twins and mothers-in-law, by way of blasphemy and indecency, up to the empty forms of literary paradox and epigram. If he is satisfied with the crude ugly matter he is vulgar; if with the vacant form, fatuous.

Again, on this theory, there should be one thing, and only one, which no man can think ridiculous: that which he is thinking

[1] Loc. cit. Cf. *Canto Notturno.*

beautiful. He can make fun of what he fears or loves or despises or reverences without lessening his reverence or fear or contempt or love, though naturally he cannot do this at the moment when one of these passions dominates his whole nature to the exclusion of every other activity; when, for instance, he is mad with terror. For what is terrible, revered, amiable, contemptible, may be ugly, but what is beautiful cannot. Doubtless, we should wish what on other grounds we love to be aesthetically perfect also, as we may wish that what we aesthetically admire were also in other ways good or that our rival were ugly; but this is not always so. It might seem that if an object were purely terrible or desirable and nothing else, if it were just an embodiment of terror or desire its appearance must be expressive of desire or terror, and so beautiful. But even when the tyranny of these passions is past, their object is not always expressive of them. The primary aesthetic activity still fails; we may be unable to make the thing beautiful and yet by expressing our aesthetic repulse may make it amusing. I am more troubled by the difficulty that we do seem to find things beautiful and amusing at the same time, especially certain sayings and doings of children and products of naive and primitive art. If this is truly so, my suggestion fails. But I have not satisfied myself that really the same thing, in the same context and from the same point of view, is found at the same time beautiful and funny. It has all along been my contention that from the sublime to the ludicrous is less than a step. It is just the high claims of the sublime which render it so susceptible to the slightest change in the angle of vision, the slightest inflection of the voice.

> 'Deus sum; commutavero
> Eandem hanc, si voltis; faciam ego ex tragœdia.
> Commœdia ut sit: omnibus isdem versibus,'[1]

but commutation in the intention of either actor or audience there surely must be. The emphasis must be shifted.

Take the sayings of children: 'I should rather like to have been God, but I suppose it's too late to change now.' This is undoubtedly

[1] Plautus, *Amphit.* Prologue. [I am a god. If you like I can turn this tragedy into comedy without changing a line.]

funny, and I think it also has a certain aesthetic charm of the primary kind. And if so, it will be urged that neither is separable from the other without being itself modified, so that, if I try to distinguish, I may be saying no more than that a thing's ludicrousness is not identical with its beauty, and this would be true of any two qualities. Yet if the child had said: 'I should like to be God,' some of the charm would have remained, though it would not have been quite the same, because not heightened by any humour, whereas, if the original remark had been made by a wit instead of naively, it would still have been amusing though no longer charming, and therefore not amusing in quite the same way. Much the same I think might be said of Fra Angelico's *Paradiso*. While we let ourselves go with such an unquestioning expression of blissful aspiration, its very simplicity is beautiful; while we contrast it with a more profound experience of the unsearchable things of God, it is amusing. The childish simplicity is in itself beautiful, but the moment its isolation is broken down it becomes incongruous with a wider context, and one of the two elements, its naivety or our artificiality is absurd.

Two obvious stumbling-blocks for the theory are puns and practical jokes, both claiming the title of 'comic'. Both kinds are often bad and may be so bad as to become 'quite ridiculous', for instance Lamb's question: 'Is that hare your own?' and his reply, to the poacher's indignant affirmative: 'I thought it might be a wig.' But take, as a good instance, the oil-magnate's advice to a preacher: 'If you don't strike oil in the first five minutes stop boring.' I cannot see that this fits either way. Of course amusement, like beauty, is no quality of objects, and there is no correct sense of humour. I can understand that any theory of the ludicrous may seem funny, though a theory of beauty may not be thought beautiful.

7. As will have been seen, I have no very firm confidence in my conclusion, for I suspect some funny things not easy to bring under it, and some things coming under it not very funny. I confess that it originated in my mind less from a consideration of the facts than from an attempt to work out what seemed to me the necessary conclusion from a theory of beauty which I had accepted on other

grounds; but, as often happens, I was amused, as I proceeded, to see how much of comedy might be made to fit in with the formula; more, indeed, than seems to me to fall under any other that has been suggested. I have therefore thought that the theory might be of interest as suggesting either a confirmation or reconsideration of Croce's *Estetica*.

# Appendix B

## THE SUBJECT

Assuming that art can only seek its subject matter in human feeling, it would seem that within this field there is no inartistic subject, none which is inexpressible; though we may very properly forbid on moral or political grounds the publication of the most beautiful work to an indiscriminate audience at a particular time, or even to an average audience at any time. Artistic genius has proved it possible to express human experiences containing as a necessary ingredient a disordered liver or some brutal lust. When we blame an artist's subject we usually mean that he has not succeeded in expressing his feeling but has only described its causes and symptoms or stimulated it in us. It seems pretty clear that we should generally understand objections to 'the fleshly school of poetry' in this sense. Through some fault either in the poet or the critic the latter does not contemplate a human emotion in tranquillity; he merely feels concupiscent or shocked or both. And I suppose the same must be said about the more difficult subject of pain.

In reading J. E. Flecker's *Hassan* I feel the same kind of aesthetic dissatisfaction with the rather luscious passages and with the hideously suggestive descriptions of physical torment, though sensuously the one subject may be attractive and the other repulsive. Of the voluptuous parts I might have suspected my condemnation to be really moralistic – a disapproval of their publication to myself or others. But nobody could suppose that the torture passages would encourage cruelty; they seem rather calculated, by making us realize the abomination, to have an opposite effect; and if the pain were not inflicted but natural the censure would remain. They get on the nerves, they make us feel sick. And to insert a finger into the organism and twitch the nerves, whether to effects of luxury or nausea, is

not the artist's function. When he does so he is not expressing feeling but merely imitating and stimulating sensation. I have never read a work of such obvious poetic qualities which seemed to me so repulsive on, I think, purely poetic grounds. But in varying degrees the fault, if it be one, is fashionable. For several reasons contemporary poets are more apt to be horrid than voluptuous; or at least they outdo recent fashions less in luxury than in horror. They mean to make our flesh creep. To mention only respected names, Mr Masefield's *Enslaved* seems to me to verge upon the same failing.

One way of explaining the censure would be to argue that any 'merely bodily' affection is a subject incapable of artistic treatment, as for instance a colic, because only emotions, which no doubt are often conditioned by bodily affections, can be expressed.[1] Or to argue that very violent and overmastering bodily affections are incapable of artistic treatment, of being remembered in tranquillity, because, owing to their physical nature, they must either not be really 'remembered' at all, or must be remembered without tranquillity. That is to say they can be induced but not expressed.

But it is difficult to rest content with this censorship of the abstract 'subject'. All seems to depend on the treatment. Parts of the *Oedipus Rex* and of *King Lear* deal with the subject of extreme bodily pain. It has indeed been argued and is, I think, fairly arguable that they *are* too merely painful to be good art, at least when realistically acted. But they seem to me, even in this point, to be quite different from *Hassan*. Pain however great, like physical ecstasy, is accompanied, so long as the sufferer retains his sanity, by a feeling or emotion which may be called human as distinct from merely bestial lust or agony. This can be expressed so as to be contemplated as well as suffered; its realization does not necessarily overmaster us. It is this expression at which the great artists have aimed, if sometimes even their powers have not sufficed for its achievement.

The conclusion seems to be that the 'fleshly' fault arises when the poet fails to express and merely describes a bodily affection, or perhaps thereby stimulates in his reader one like that he is describing. In the first alternative the fault would be of the same kind as

[1] Cf. Bosanquet, 'The Nature of Aesthetic Emotion', in *Mind*, April 1894.

any tiresome piece of imitative realism. In the second it would be this combined with the fault of propaganda. My only reason for hesitating to accept this is that, though I should be prepared to quote and perhaps to parody the most boring passages of descriptive detail or of didactic, I could not bring myself to repeat the worst passages of *Hassan*. I could not easily bring myself to re-read them. But that is also true of some mere vulgarities.

It must of course be remembered that a poem giving purely aesthetic experience to one man may not to others.

For further reading on the subject extracts in English from the principal writers can be found in my *Philosophies of Beauty from Socrates to Robert Bridges*, Clarendon Press, 1931. Also:

Clive Bell: *Art.*
B. Bosanquet: *History of Aesthetic.*
A. C. Bradley: *Oxford Lectures on Poetry.*
R. G. Collingwood: *Outline of a Philosophy of Art.*
B. Croce: *Essentials of Aesthetics.*
D. Hume: *Essay XXIII.*
W. Wordsworth: *Preface to Lyrical Ballads.* Letter to a Friend of Burns.

# INDEX OF AUTHORS AND ARTISTS

# Index of Authors and Artists


Addison, 9, 25, 64, 66, 67, 153, 154, 155, 159, 168, 228
Æschylus, 150, 165, 225
Akenside, 174
Aliotta, 197
Alison, 179, 198
Allen, Grant, 23, 24
Angelico, 234
Apollonius of Tyana, 53
Aquinas, Thos., 6, 179
Archilochus, 47
Ariosto, 216
Aristophanes, 210, 212, 216, 217, 218, 224, 225
Aristotle, 9, 22, 25, 40, 41, 45–50, 54–57, 59, 61, 93, 95, 177, 210, 219, 230

Bach, 179
Bacon, 20, 81
Bain, 223
Basch, 142
Beerbohm, 225
Beethoven, 8, 23, 88, 92, 112, 146, 185
Bergson, 66, 141, 207, 215, 218–22, 224, 232
Bernard, 63
Blake, 99, 159
Bodmer, 67
Boileau, 153
Bosanquet, B., 16, 24, 29, 40, 57, 102, 147, 172, 193, 203, 237
Bossu, 29, 41
Botticelli, 76, 110, 140
Bowles, 16, 161
Bradley, A. C., 120, 141, 145, 156–76, 215, 218
Bradley, F. H., 14, 41, 57
Breitinger, 67
Brontë, C., 171
Browne, Sir Thos., 30
Browning, 54, 92, 104, 181, 185
Bunyan, 56
Burke, 2, 25, 46, 76, 87, 153, 168, 174
Burnet, Thos., 26, 152
Burney, F., 60, 174
Butcher, 46, 57, 93
Butler, S., 19
Byron, 12, 29, 51, 161
Bywater, 46, 93, 186

Candrea, 67
Canova, 15
Carlyle, 27
Cervantes, 42, 169, 216, 218, 220
Chardin, 185
Cicero, 75
Coleridge, 13, 16, 21, 28, 34, 39, 74, 76, 79, 80, 98, 99, 131, 138, 140, 151, 152, 155, 168, 170, 177, 186, 198, 200, 202, 203, 212, 231, 232
Collignon, 53
Congreve, 44, 143
Constable, 52, 159
Cook, 202
Cook-Wilson, 81
Corneille, 29, 216
Courthope, 54
Croce, 3, 20, 22, 25, 27, 42, 49, 57, 73, 84, 89, 108, 123–48, 146, 168, 169, 187, 190, 192, 193, 197, 198, 199, 200, 203, 211, 214, 216, 223, 226, 229, 230, 231, 232, 235

Da Vinci, 15
Dante, 24, 26, 34, 35, 143, 144, 169, 171, 230
De Quincey, 150, 168
de Sélincourt, E., 98, 146, 183
dei Franceschi, Piero, 99

*Della Cruscans*, 99
Della Quercia, Jacopo, 111
Della Robbia, Luca, 110
Dennis, 55
Deschamps, E., 171
Dickens, 55, 230
Diogenes Laertius, 40, 171
Dolci, Carlo, 44
Donne, 142
Drayton, M., 9
Dryden, 9, 29, 41, 60, 177, 227
Duccio, 181
Duhamel, 17
Dürer, 175

Eckermann, 56
*Edinburgh Review*, 107, 179, 187
El Greco, 100
*Elia, Essays of*, 44, 219
Emerson, 185
Epicurus, 40
Euripides, 50, 99, 162, 171, 225
Evelyn, 26
Ezekiel, 150

Fiedler, C., 190
Flecker, 236
France, A., 140
Frost, 65
Fry, 108
*Futurists*, 54

Gentile, 108
Giorgione, 161
Goethe, 8, 25, 28, 51, 58, 87, 159, 161, 182, 217, 224
Gottsched, Frau, 67
Gurney, 140

Harrison, J., 121
Hartmann, 156
Hegel, 22, 24, 25, 33, 37, 38, 47, 48, 50, 77, 78, 79, 90, 91, 93, 102–23, 123, 129, 154, 155, 168, 173, 180, 195, 207, 215–19, 221, 232
Herder, 164, 168, 179
Herodotus, 219
Heyne, 119
Hobbes, 209, 210, 232
Hogarth, 179
Home, 64, 67, 168
Homer, 47, 58, 146, 150, 159, 162, 171
Housman, 119
Howes, 92
Hügel, Von, 50
Hugo, Victor, 140
Hulme, 108
Hume, 64, 135
Hunt, Holman, 15
Hutcheson, 64, 154

Isaiah, 150

Jarintzov, 176
Joachim, 132
Johnson, 9, 21, 29, 38, 44, 55, 61, 150, 159, 168, 228
Joseph, H. W. B., 81

Kames, 64, 67, 168
Kant, 10, 13, 17, 22, 25, 34, 38, 63–81, 83, 85, 89, 90, 91, 97, 99, 126, 127, 129, 139, 157, 158, 166, 171, 175, 177, 195, 197, 198, 209
Keats, 8, 19, 24, 44, 146, 161
Keller, Helen, 6
Ker, 82
Kingsley, C., 184
Kirchmann, 174
Knight, Payne, 117, 150, 168, 179

Laird, 132
Lamb, 21, 44, 61, 141, 168
Landor, 28
Lange, 148
Leibnitz, 107
Leopardi, 11, 88, 231, 232
Lessing, 44, 140
Lipps, 89, 141, 179, 185, 187–91, 207, 208, 210, 214, 224
Locke, 211
Lombardi, Tullio, 99
*London Magazine*, 26
Longinus, 25, 150, 153, 168, 230
Lotze, 13, 76, 97, 155, 185, 220
Lucan, 150
Lucian, 216, 225
Lucretius, 88
Luini, 184

Mackenzie, 42
Mallarmé, 181
Marlowe, 9, 155, 158
Marvell, 154, 172
Masefield, 237
Matisse, 100
Meredith, 225
Meunier, 38
Michelangelo, 8, 35, 64, 100, 111, 159
Millet, 38, 161
Milton, 6, 8, 15, 23, 44, 49, 59, 64, 96, 140, 144, 145, 150, 154, 159, 165, 169, 201, 230
Mitchell, 24, 116, 120, 191
Molière, 218, 230
Monet, 23, 30, 38, 52
Montague, 169
Moore, G. E., 13
Moore, T., 7
Morris, Wm., 37, 38
Mozart, 99, 119, 124
Münsterberg, 57
Murray, Gilbert, 96, 121, 182
Myers, 184
Myron, 178

*Neo-Platonists*, 194
Nettleship, R. L., 15, 46, 125, 180
Neumann, 67
Nietzsche, 46, 50, 75, 89, 91, 95–101, 144, 170, 177, 180

Otway, 150

Pater, W., 2, 15, 33, 49, 96, 99, 186
Patmore, Coventry, 15
Perugino, 24
Pheidias, 15, 35, 53
Philostratus, 53
Plato, 6, 8, 21, 29, 31–45, 49, 50, 51–4, 59, 62, 85, 93, 100, 134, 139, 142, 143, 145, 177, 178, 179, 183, 185, 194, 210, 222, 232
Plautus, 142, 230
Pliny, 52, 178
Plotinus, 31, 32, 54, 59, 60, 62, 89, 184
Polycletus, 178
Pomfret, 172
Pope, 119, 142, 161, 163, 203, 227
Prichard, 132
*Psalmist, The*, 155
Puttenham, 183
Pythagoras, 178

*Quarterly Review*, 15, 117
Quintilian, 53

Rapin, 26
Rashdall, 41, 42
Reid, 13
Rembrandt, 6, 20, 161, 175, 230
Reni, Guido, 184
Reynolds, 55, 60, 94
Riegl, 109
Rolland, R., 119, 133
Rossetti, Christina, 144
Royce, 124
Ruge, 92
Ruskin, 26, 28, 29, 33, 34, 37, 42, 43, 44, 52, 54, 73, 75, 81, 100, 128, 161, 163, 174, 178, 180, 184, 202
Rymer, 55

St Augustine, 184
St Beuve, 9
St Francis, 34
St John of the Cross, 49
St Thomas Aquinas, 6, 179
Saintsbury, 29, 182
Santayana, 57
Sappho, 46, 150, 202
Sassoferrato, 6
Schelling, 56, 57, 129, 167, 168, 200
Schiller, 10, 34, 49, 79, 91, 97, 99, 168, 200
Schleiermacher, 146, 175
Schopenhauer, 16, 35, 40, 47, 57, 62, 72, 82–101, 113, 126, 127, 129, 144, 164, 168, 174, 175
Scott, 44
Seidl, 156, 160
Sesshu, 181
Shakespeare, 16, 17, 25, 28, 34, 42, 44, 55, 56, 59, 76, 110, 112, 125, 143, 145, 146, 160, 171, 173, 185, 201, 211, 212, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 222, 225, 230, 237
Shaw, 180

Shawcross, 168, 202
Shelley, 7, 34, 39, 46, 49, 100, 119, 144, 145, 171, 183
Sidgwick, 13
Sidney, 29, 119, 180
Smith, J. A., 48
Socrates, 186, 210
Sophocles, 96, 110, 225, 237
Southey, 107
*Spectator*, 61, 168
Spencer, Herbert, 23, 24
Spenser, 34, 98, 161, 183
Sterne, 224
Stevenson, 86, 231, 232
Stewart, 7
Suckling, 169
Swinburne, 44, 52, 144, 171, 229

*Tatler*, 61
Tennyson, 185
Thackeray, 163
Theocritus, 150, 171
Thoreau, 26
Tickell, 9
Timocles, 87
Tintoretto, 163
Titian, 12, 59, 112
Tolstoy, 8, 42, 43, 44, 59, 100
Tourgenieff, 162
Tumarkin, 79
Tupper, 225
Turner, 24, 29, 52, 159

Velasquez, 35, 44, 45, 140, 171, 175, 185, 230
Verlaine, 139
Vermeer, 185
Virgil, 18, 24, 35, 172, 184
Volkmann, 33

Wagner, 179
Waley, 50
Walkley, 225
Wallace, 2
Waller, 182
Warton, 161
Weisse, 175
Whistler, 34, 37, 175
Winckelmann, 55, 98, 100, 153
Witasek, 188
Wohlgemuth, 64
Wölfflin, 109
Wordsworth, 8, 9, 20, 27, 34, 49, 51, 59, 70, 73, 75, 76, 79, 80, 87, 88, 89, 92, 117, 138, 141, 150, 151, 155, 157, 168, 170, 172, 177, 178, 182, 200
Wordsworth, Dorothy, 151
Worringer, 109
Wotton, Sir H., 26

DATE DUE

JAN 2 0 1968
FEB 20 1968
OCT 14 1969
NOV 10 1970
JUN 21 1974
JUL 23 1974
JUL 19 1977
AUG 2 1977
NOV 19 1991
MAR 21 1998

DOMINICAN COLLEGE LIBRARY
BH201 .C29 1962
Carritt, E./The theory of beauty.
3 3645 00059049 0

BH201 .C37 1962
Carritt, E. F. (Edgar
Frederick), 1876-1964.
The theory of beauty.

Dominican College Library
San Rafael, California